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American Cinematographer

OCTOBER 1998

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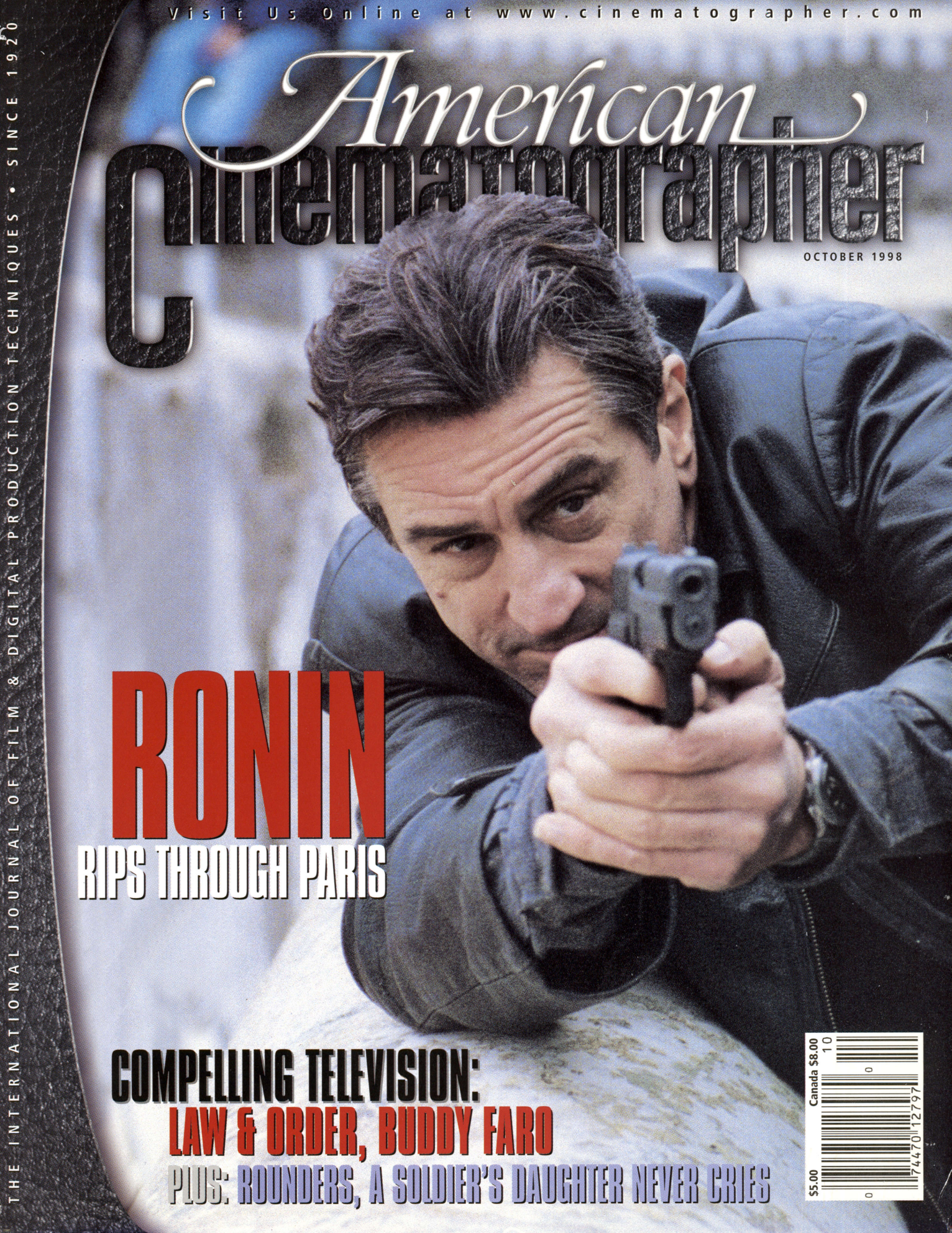

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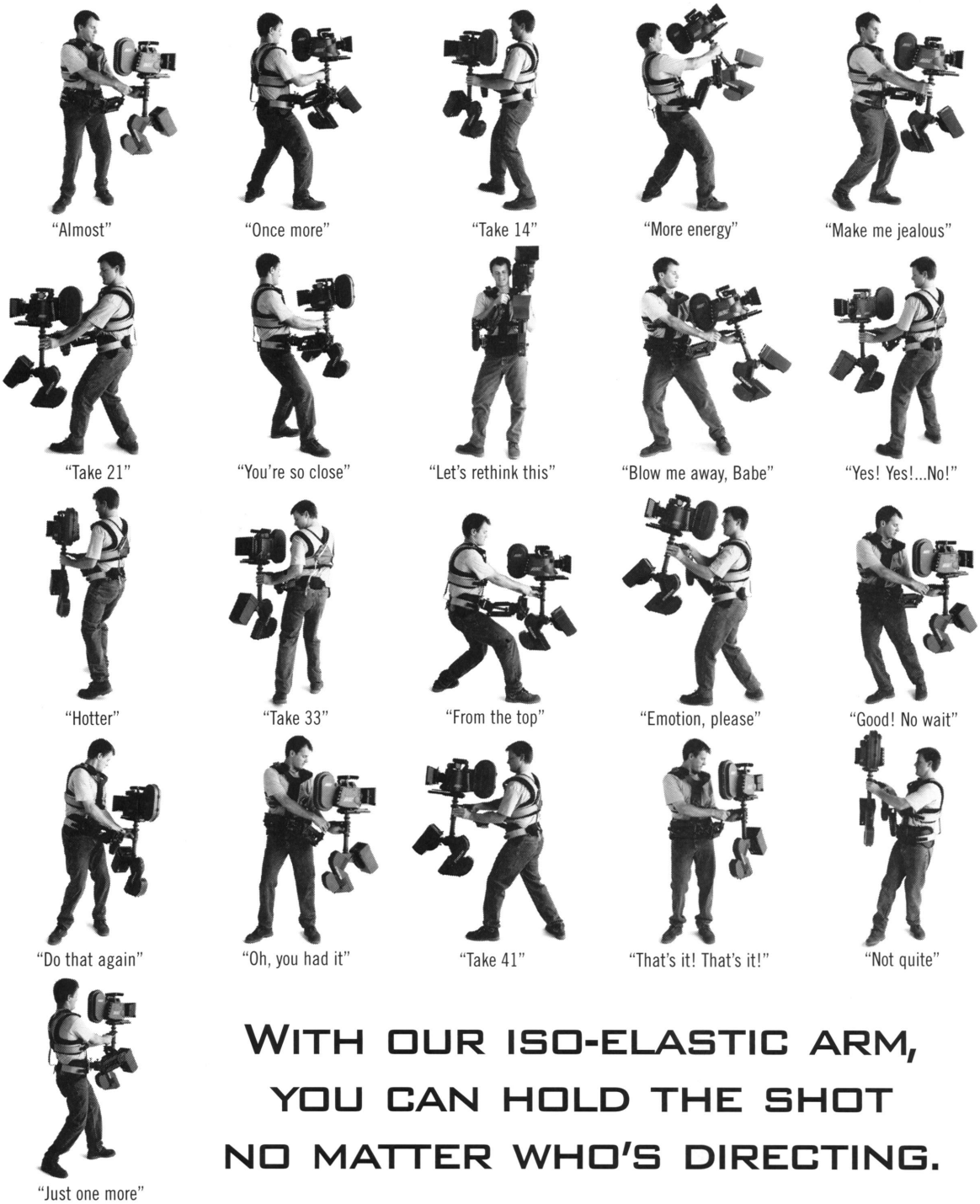

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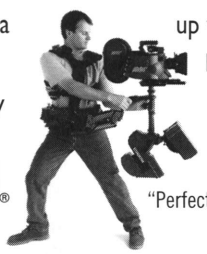
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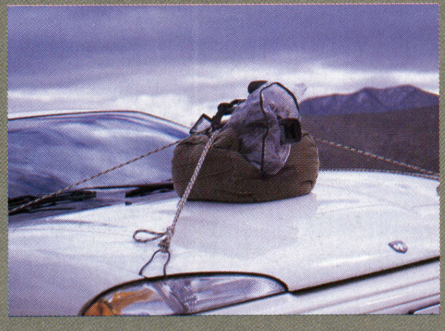

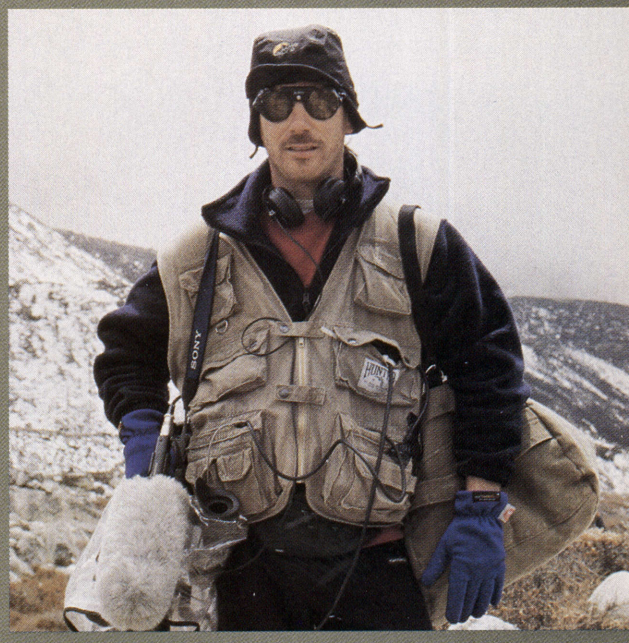

Rick Young - Europe, Digital Production
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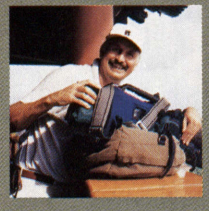

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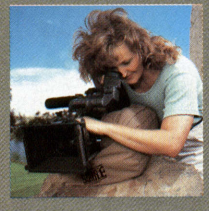

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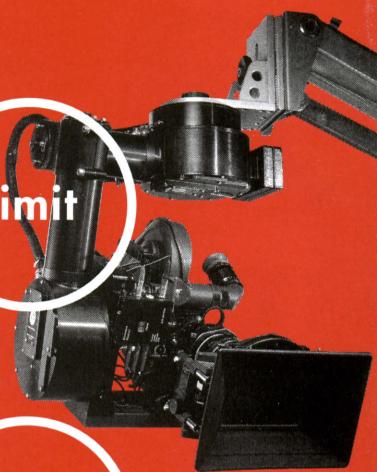

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On Our Cover:
An international-espionage expert (Robert De Niro) draws a bead on his foes in *Ronin*, an action-packed thriller directed by John Frankenheimer and photographed by Robert Fraisse (photo by Patrick Camboulive, courtesy of MGM/UA).

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Kathleen Fairweather
Bob Fisher
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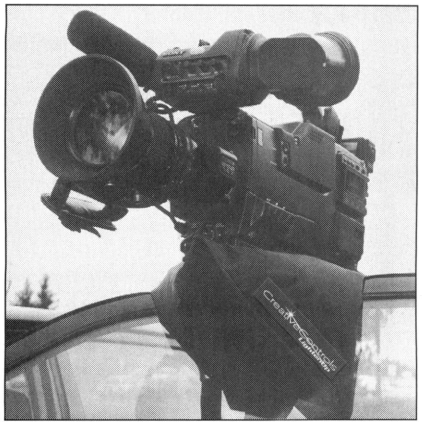

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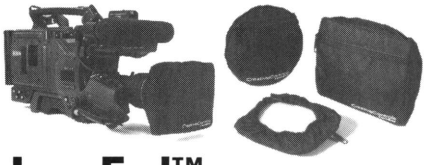

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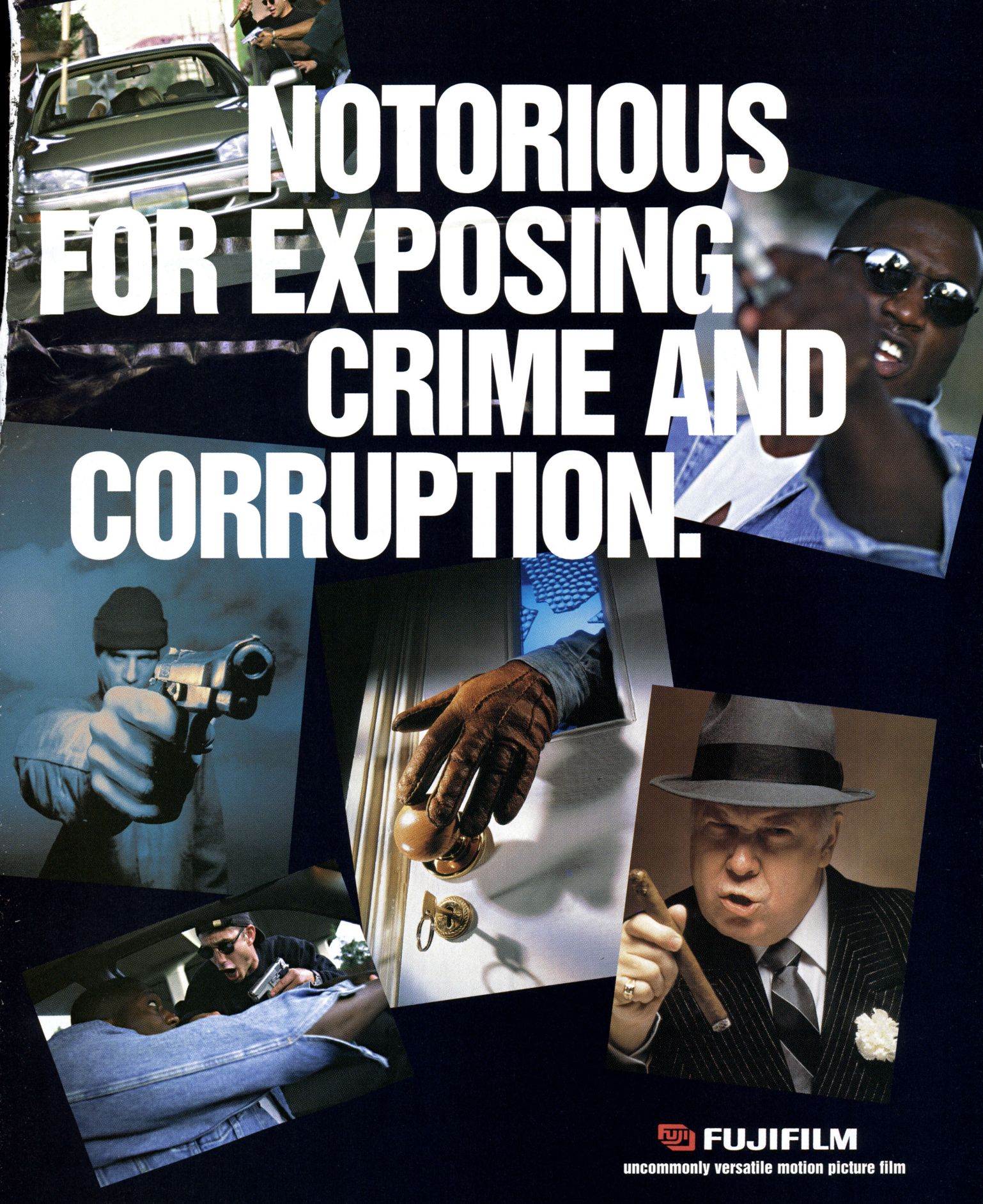

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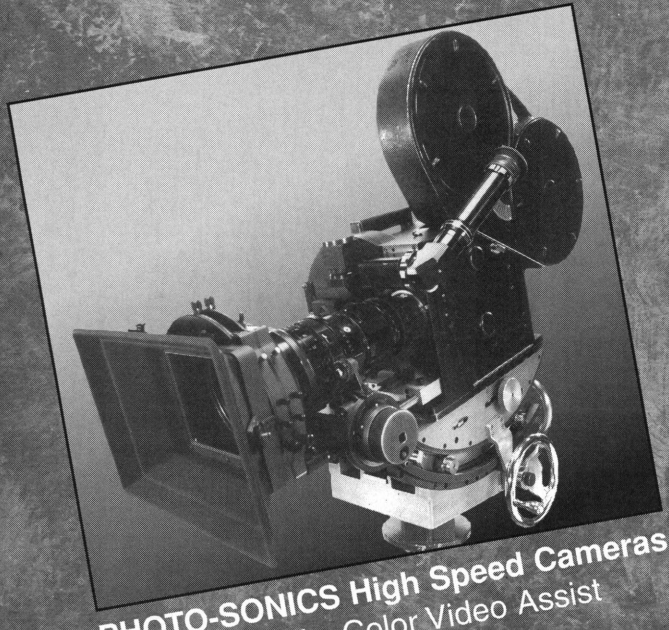

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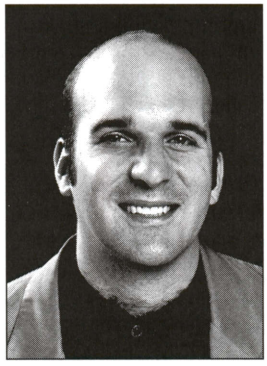


This issue of *American Cinematographer* has a distinctly Gallic flavor, highlighting the work of three top-flight French cinematographers: Robert Fraisse, Jean-Marc Fabre and Jean Yves Escoffier.

Of course, the French have long demonstrated an affinity for motion pictures, an art form which provokes religious rhapsodies on both banks of the Seine. It's never difficult to engage the locals in a spirited discussion about cinema, as I discovered several years ago on a trip to Paris. At the time, the hot topic was David Fincher's *Seven,* a stylish thriller featuring impeccable photography by French native Darius Khondji, AFC (a recent ASC inductee who is currently back in his homeland shooting *The Ninth Gate* for legendary director Roman Polanski). When I confessed to several Parisian cinephiles that I lived in Hollywood and was friendly with Darius, I was besieged with enthusiastic questions and seemingly endless refills of Merlot.

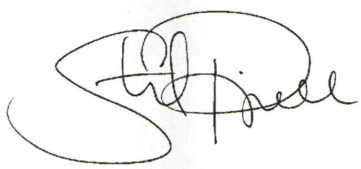
Our cover story on *Ronin* (page 34) reveals that the French still have a fondness for American-style thrillers. In teaming up with veteran director John Frankenheimer, Robert Fraisse proves that he is as adept at filming spectacular action as he is at capturing spectacular landscapes (e.g. last year's stunning *Seven Years in Tibet).* Meanwhile, Fraisse's countrymen, Fabre and Escoffier, brought their skills to the States. In *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries* (page 84), Fabre helps the respected team of James Ivory and Ismael Merchant depart from their period work and delve into a contemporary family drama. Escoffier also brings an outsider's eye for detail to John Dahl's *Rounders* (page 44), a compelling exploration of New York's underground poker scene.

Since October traditionally marks *AC*'s special television issue, we have also sought to underscore the abilities of the small screen's finest directors of photography. Our annual review of Emmy Award nominees (page 72) offers a look at this year's celebrated cameramen, who tackled a wide range of subjects with skill and panache.

That same spirit of adventurous creativity is apparent in both *Law & Order* (page 52) and *Buddy Faro* (page 62). Viewers who appreciate the solid storytelling and photography that veteran director/cinematographer Constantine Makris, ASC brings to *Law & Order* should also seek out the September premiere of *Buddy Faro,* which features some truly imaginative work by Aaron Schneider, one of the industry's best young directors of photography. Working with color reversal stock and an offbeat script by writer-producer Mark Frost, Schneider packed the series pilot with a succession of eye-popping images that are certainly worth a look.

This month's issue also introduces a new department, Global Village (page 109), which will offer production stories from filmmaking hotspots around the world. The first installment, which details the visual effects work for the recent London-based feature *The Avengers,* was penned by England-based *AC* correspondent Nick Radlo.

Sincerely,



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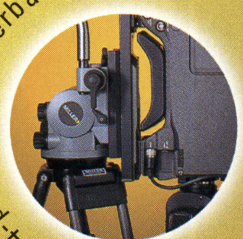

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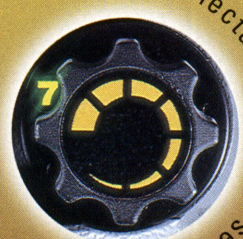

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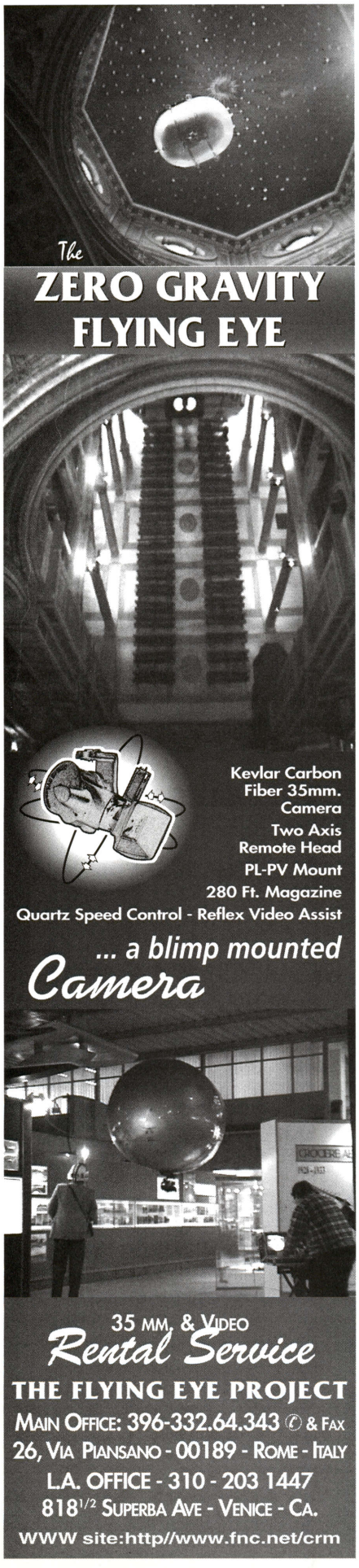

Letters

Super 8 Update From Abroad

As a collector of film cameras (Super 8, Single 8 and Double 8) and writer for the German film magazine *Schmalfilm*, I took much interest in the article "MoMa Celebrates Super 8" [see Points East, *AC* July '98]. Eric Rudolph writes that "regular 8mm film… was abandoned in the early Nineties." That is correct: Kodak stopped production of standard 8mm film in 1992, but there are still possibilities to buy such stock. The German firm Media Art in Bruhl has for the past four years been producing black-and-white standard 8mm film, which you can buy in many European countries. The American firm of John Schwind in Dixon, California, produces standard 8mm film in color. One can buy such film on original Kodakchrome material — Kodakchrome 25 and Ektachrome 125. I have seen both stocks to be available in London, Cambridge, England and New York City.

— Henry Bohmann
Hamburg, Germany

Crane Caption Correction

We were very appreciative of the photographs and mention of Super Technocranes in "When Worlds Collide," the cinematography story on *Armageddon* [*AC* July '98]. Unfortunately, the operator is incorrectly identified in the caption which accompanied the photo on page 41. The Techno operator on the production was Steve Welch, whose work on *Titanic*, *Hard Rain*, *Armageddon* and many other pictures is an important reason why filmmakers choose cranes from Panavision Remote Systems.

— Andy Romanoff
President,
Panavision Remote Systems
Burbank, California

Errata

In the July issue's New Products section, the listing for Stanton Video Services' Jimmy Jib Lite (page 107) was mislabeled. In addition, the phone number for Pennylane Animation, Inc., publisher of *The Little Black Book of Visual Effects,* was incorrect; the correct contact number is (213) 860-6552. *AC* regrets the errors and any inconvenience it may have caused these companies.

Kind Words From the ASC Website

I've been a mag subscriber for more than 10 years. Glad to see well-conceived web content — keep it up!

— Eric Peter Abramson
Nederland, CO
epa@yellowpine.com

If you're not reading *AC*, you're not serious about filmmaking...

— Jim Scolari
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My favorite website. Always the best technical reference source. Thanks.

— Filus Ghazali
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I enjoy checking out www.cinematographer.com in between purchases of *AC* because it's a good site and offers snippets of info that I can print and read at my leisure. I really enjoy the Clubhouse "Tricks of the Trade" section as a way to find out interesting and applicable techniques.

— Scott Cleator
Christchurch, New Zealand
swc@storm.chchpoly.ac.nz

We invite all AC *readers to visit us at www.cinematographer.com.*

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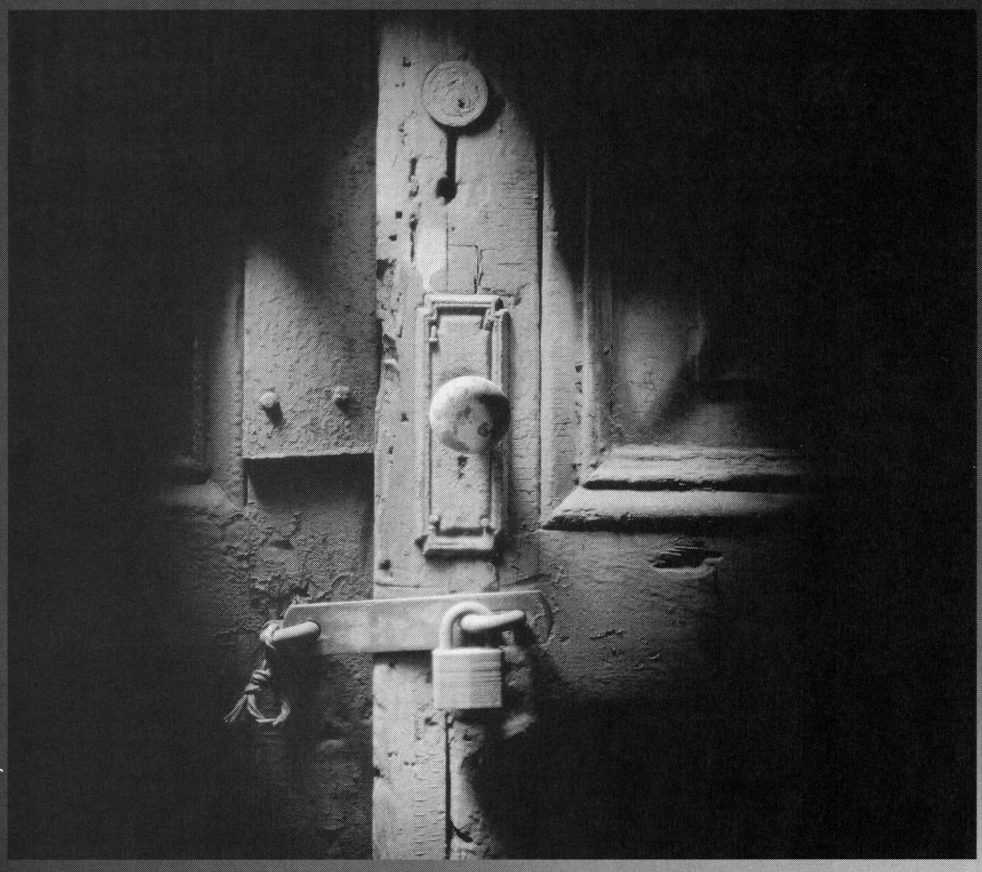

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Digital Perspectives

Streaming Wars

by Frank Beacham

As the media PR machine begins to focus on the launch of over-the-air digital television this fall, a parallel drama has begun to play out that may have an even greater impact on delivery of television to the home in the future.

Many experts believe that electronic entertainment, including television and radio, will eventually be delivered to audiences over interactive networks — essentially, high-bandwidth versions of today's Internet. If this proves true, then the "streaming wars" now raging over delivery of web-based media should command high interest.

Those who have closely followed the rapid progression of streaming-media technology (the ability to play, or "stream," audio, video and graphics in real time from a website) have been intrigued by the delicate public dance that has evolved over the past year between RealNetworks founder Rob Glaser and his former employer, Microsoft Corporation.

Three years ago, Glaser, who used to head the multimedia division at Microsoft, single-handedly pioneered the streaming media market with the introduction of RealAudio. Since then, his company has grown to dominate the market, attracting over 80 percent of Internet users. This was a number Microsoft could not ignore. Last summer, it licensed RealNetworks' technology and became a 10 percent shareholder in Glaser's company.

As with so many innovations in software technology, Microsoft decided to copy Glaser's invention by creating NetShow, its own version of streaming media. Recently, Microsoft introduced Windows Media Player, an application that includes support for more than 20 different file formats — including RealAudio and RealVideo — within a single universal user interface.

While this may sound good on the surface, Microsoft only supports RealAudio and RealVideo through the older 4.0 version of RealNetworks. The current 5.0 version and the upcoming G2 (now in beta) are not supported. This is where the problems begin.

Recently, in a very public forum — a congressional hearing investigating Microsoft's allegedly unfair trade practices — Glaser charged that Windows Media Player often "breaks" the latest version of his company's software, giving users an error message when they attempt to play content not supported by the Microsoft application.

Ironically, this is similar to what I found recently in testing WebTV Plus, a Microsoft-owned product that also supports only earlier versions of RealNetworks' software. When encountering a sound or video file whose technology is not licensed by WebTV Networks, the user gets an error message pointing the blame to the publisher of the website content, not WebTV.

Microsoft vigorously denies that Windows Media Player disables RealNetworks' media players. However, two other streaming-media companies — Xing and Digital Bitcasting — have joined Glaser, charging that Microsoft is disabling their products as well. "With over 90 percent of desktops now running Microsoft Windows, the entire software industry is dependent upon an important cooperative working relationship with Microsoft," said Ken Wasch, president of the Software Publishers Association. "For firms that have chosen not to compete with any Microsoft product, the

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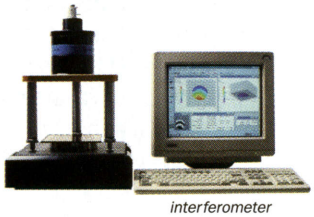

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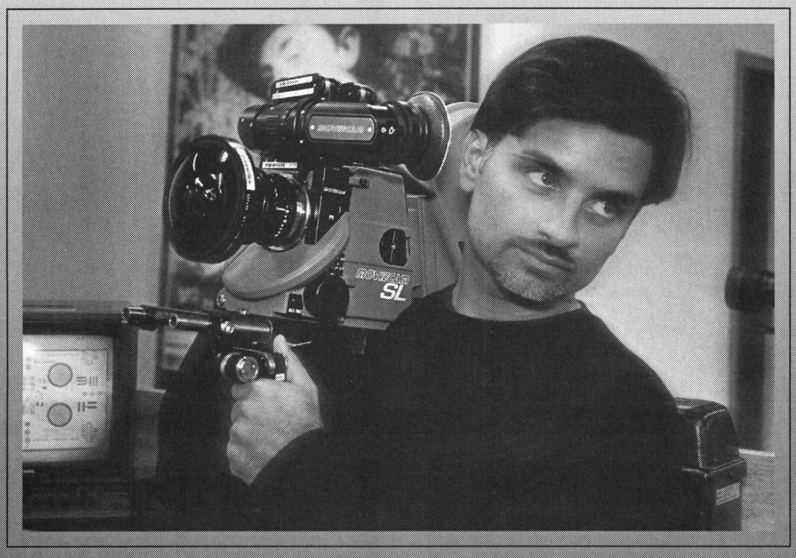

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relationship is very positive. However, for firms seeking to develop products that may compete with Microsoft's own offerings, the relationship can be extremely problematic."

For end users, the problems with these competing technologies can be mind-numbingly complex. Glaser told Congress that Microsoft's Windows Media Player disables RealNetworks' products in 10 out of 16 scenarios. The 10 scenarios include cases where the browser is Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer, where the product in question is shipping "gold" or "beta," and where the product is either a free RealPlayer or an enhanced RealPlayer Plus.

The great promise of Internet media is it lets anyone become a broadcaster without government or corporate restrictions on content. As Glaser told Congress, "In the new world of the Internet, it matters less if you are large or small. It matters less if you are one of the gatekeepers of traditional media. If you have a good idea, you can reach an audience of millions."

For this reason, working out a compromise that simplifies user playback of Internet media is essential if the technology is to succeed in the long run. Experiencing Net media should be no more difficult than tuning a radio or flipping the channels on a TV set. As public policy, these issues rank equally with those involving terrestrial digital television, which eventually may have less real impact than streaming media.

Users of Internet media have long desired a simple, updatable universal user interface that can play all programs, regardless of the manufacturer of the authoring software. The commercial battle should stay on the content-publishing side and not extend to the end user. It is too much to ask the audience to navigate through the arcane technical issues resulting from the continuing battles between these fierce rivals. ■

Frank Beacham is a New York City-based writer and producer. Visit his website at: http://www.beacham.com. E-mail: frank@beacham.com.

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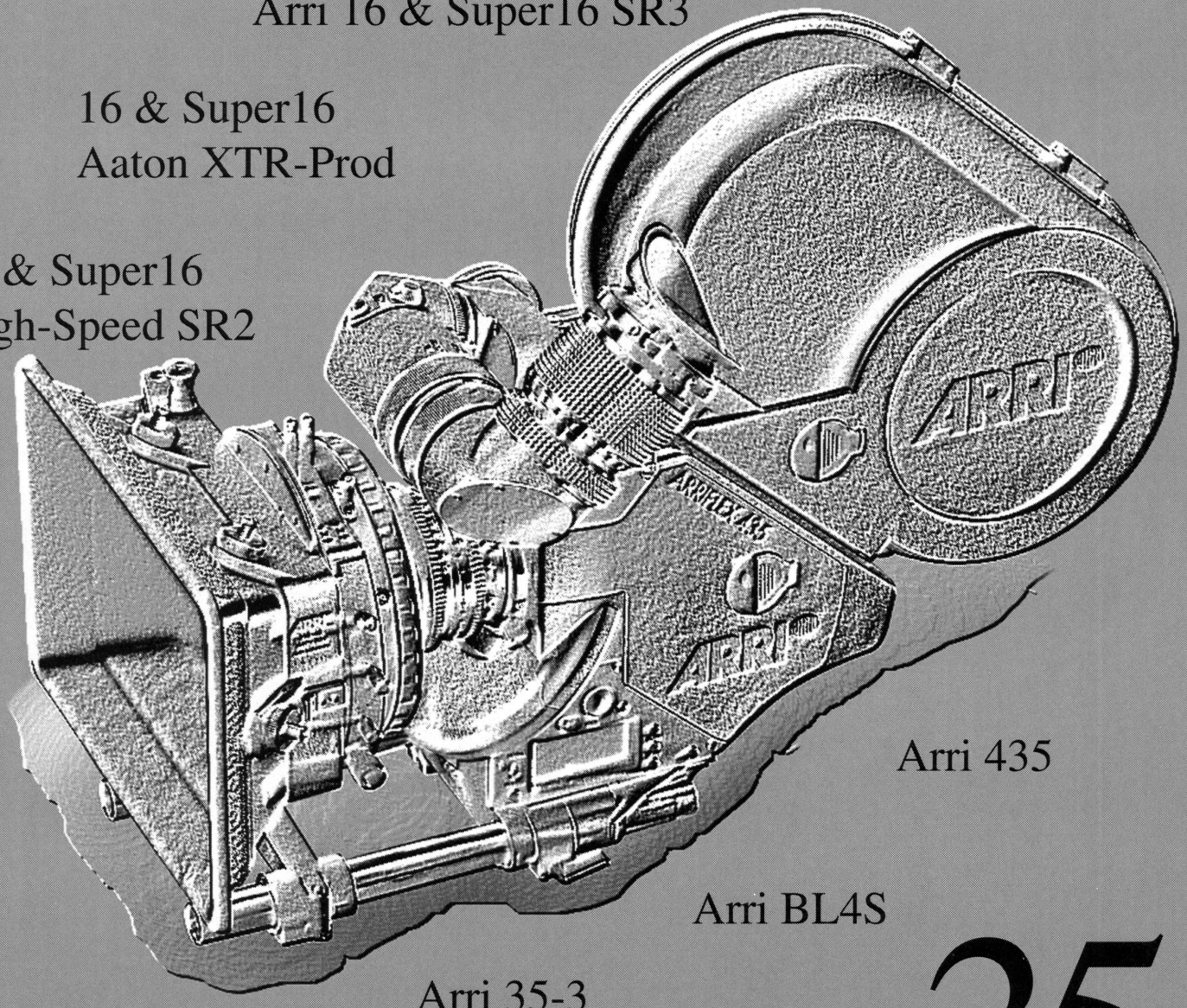

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Production Slate

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson

Return to *The Naked City*
by Mark Dillon

"There are eight million stories in the naked city. This has been one of them."

So echoed producer/narrator Mark Hellinger's famous sign-off in *The Naked City,* a 1948 feature-film drama which heralded a new direction in Hollywood moviemaking. The film took the movie camera out of the glamorizing confines of a studio and onto the bustling streets of New York City, giving audiences a heightened sense of ordinary people's lives. In relating Malvin Wald's Academy Award-winning story of a model's homicide and the subsequent police investigation, director Jules Dassin and cinematographer William H. Daniels, ASC shot at such Big Apple locations as the Roxy Theater, the city morgue, Roosevelt Hospital, the Universal Building, and the Williamsburg Bridge. (Daniels won an Oscar for his work on the picture, and later served as ASC President from 1961 through 1963.) Everyday sights, sounds, and passersby interweave with *The Naked City*'s fictional murder yarn, making the film as much a pictorial study of America's largest metropolis as it is a terse thriller. The picture's popularity — along with a resultant shift toward location shooting for the small screen — led to a *Naked City* television series which ran from 1958 to 1960.

In *A Killer Christmas,* TV reporter Gerry Millar (Laura Leighton) interviews Sgt. Muldoon (Scott Glenn). Bottom: Officers Muldoon and James Halloran (Courtney B. Vance) search through the shadows.

To commemorate this seminal film's golden anniversary, veteran TV writer/director Jeff Freilich (*Quincy, Baretta, Dark Justice*) has produced two updated, made-for-cable *Naked City* movies for Showtime in association with Paramount Network Television. In this modern incarnation, Scott Glenn assumes the role of seasoned detective Sgt. Muldoon, while Courtney B. Vance plays his inexperienced partner, Officer Jimmy Halloran. Freilich wrote and directed the first film (subtitled *Justice With a Bullet*) with Polish native Miroslaw Baszak handling cinematographic duties.

Director Peter Bogdanovich is helming the second film, *A Killer Christmas,* from a script by Freilich and Christopher Trumbo, in which a serial murderer panics the metropolis during the Yuletide season. Muldoon and Halloran's investigation is hampered when the killer alerts TV reporter Gerry Millar (Laura Leighton) of his next victim. Instead of warning police, the ratings-obsessed Millar brings a video crew to the intended crime scene in the hope of filming the attack in-progress, but she arrives after the murder has already occurred. Muldoon becomes emotionally entangled in the case when his girlfriend, Eva (Barbara Williams), is coincidentally wounded in the assault. (*Justice With a*

Photos by Rafy, courtesy of Showtime.

ON FILM

Ken Burns
Buddy Squires

"People try to label me as an historian, but I'm not interested in excavating dry dates, facts and events of the past. I'm a filmmaker interested in the art of the documentary and the resonances given off by the collision of images, ideas and words. I'm passionate about discovering what it means to be an American. I'm searching for the emotions which motivated our predecessors. That's what makes history worth knowing." - ***Ken Burns***

"I'm interested in stories that have the power to move people. My work is driven by a sense of exploration. It's not much fun to merely illustrate a set script. Instead, I search for particular moments of light, aspects of composition or heartfelt words that reveal something essential and emotional. I often photograph on the edge of darkness, of what film can see, trusting that these evocative images will illuminate our stories."
- ***Buddy Squires***

Ken Burns is a producer-director-cinematographer whose body of work includes *Brooklyn Bridge, Huey Long, The Statue of Liberty, The Civil War, Baseball, The West* and *Lewis and Clark*. Buddy Squires has compiled some 40 non-fiction credits as a cinematographer, including many with Burns.

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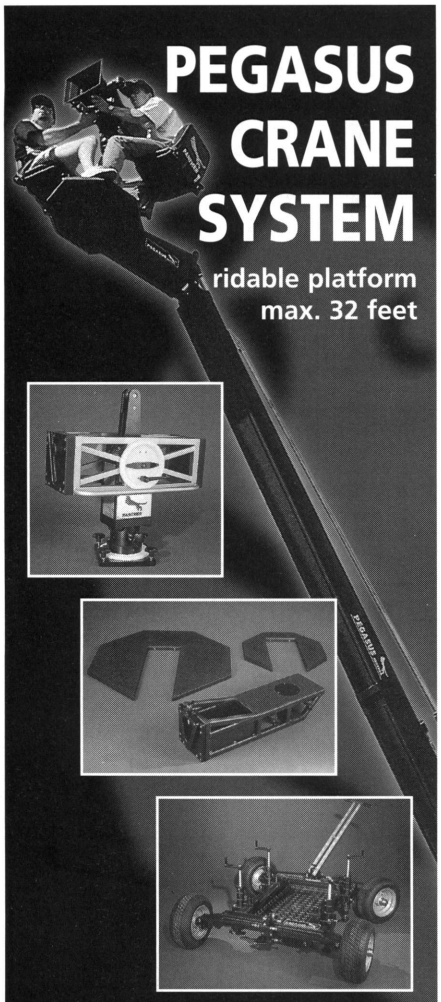

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Bullet airs on Showtime later this month, while *A Killer Christmas* will appropriately have its broadcast in December.)

One measure of how the film industry has changed over the past 50 years is that these stories — so indigenous to New York City — were shot in Toronto, Canada. A strong exchange rate on the American dollar, favorable government tax credits, and an abundance of respected local technicians have recently made Canada's largest city an irresistible location for a number of Hollywood productions.

It was on a frigid February morning that the *Naked City* crew set up for the climactic scene of *A Killer Christmas,* in which the cops trap the serial slayer on the roof of a dilapidated office building. A city block was cordoned off for the arrival of prop vehicles, including a TV news van, a fire truck, a yellow New York cab, and NYPD squad cars. Two 18K HMIs shooting through 216 diffusion frames — one on a tower and the other on a rooftop — bounced light off a white emergency vehicle, giving the impression of a less overcast day. Some 70 extras — playing Manhattanite pedestrians who encourage the killer to jump to his demise — shivered as they awaited instructions from an assistant director. Meanwhile, cinematographer James Gardner, CSC, SASC anxiously eyed the darkening skies.

Gardner cut his professional teeth shooting low-budget movies in his native South Africa. He recalls, "[We would] just shoot them quickly and make sure there was a good exposure." He later moved on to commercials, benefitting from "a big influx of English directors and cameramen such as Nicolas Roeg, who would come down between their features to do commercials for Kentucky Fried Chicken and Castle Beer. They would wind us all up and show us that there were different ways of doing things."

While Gardner can't cite any one crime film as an overriding influence on his photography for *The Naked City,* he does single out Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC as a favorite cinematographer. "That guy is a superstar, an excellent cameraman. *The Shawshank Redemption* is one of the best-looking films out there. He looks at what's going on and reacts to it as a human being, and that's how he lights. Cinematographers try not to be mechanical people — when you get it right you just know it. No light meter, nor any other tool, can tell you how to light."

On *The Naked City,* Gardner and Bogdanovich are aiming for a style that the cinematographer describes as "having as little color as possible — not because the original was black-and-white, but because that's the way we thought it should look. We're trying to get a very grainy, gritty look, which is nearly impossible on Kodak stocks nowadays." Gardner utilized Kodak's Vision 500T 5279 to achieve the necessary depth of field. "We're trying to shoot at T4 if we can, because when you're playing an entire sequence with multiple characters in one shot, you need everybody sharp. With the exteriors, we don't have huge contrasts since it's winter, there's not a lot of sun, and there are no deep shadows."

In the scene photographed on this particular day, Muldoon sends a cell phone up to the killer in the fire truck's aerial tower basket, in order to facilitate a dialogue. Bogdanovich settles into his director's chair under a rain cover, facing two video monitors — one for the A-camera (an Arriflex 35 BL-4 tracing the aerial tower's ascent), the other for the B-camera (an Arri 35 BL-III trained on the crowd below). The director explains that a two-camera system is not one he usually employs or even likes, but acknowledges that "on a 27-day shoot you have no choice."

During rehearsal, the fire truck crane enters the shot, and production designer Franco de Cotiis sets another task for himself: covering up the "City of Toronto" insignia emblazoned on the crane's arm. This is but one detail that the location and art departments of *The Naked City* must attend to in transforming Toronto into New York. Explaining the most noticeable visual differences between the two cities, Freilich points

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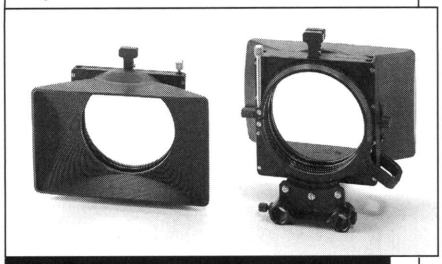

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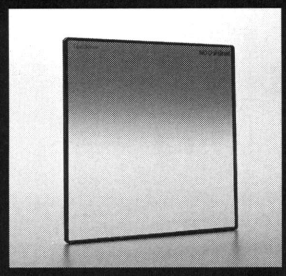

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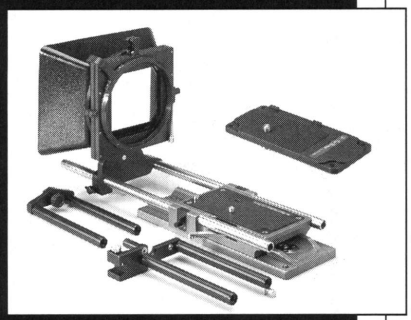

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out that "there are no overhead streetcar wires in the streets of Manhattan as there are in Toronto, and there are few remaining tracks.

"It's also rare to find the mosaic of architecture that you find in Manhattan, where you can take a 40mm lens, point it at a certain corner and see 10 generations of architecture, dating back to the late 18th Century. Here you're lucky to find one older building among 20 skyscrapers, and the degree of 'skyscraping' is different — it's rare here to find the assemblage of tall buildings you would find in New York."

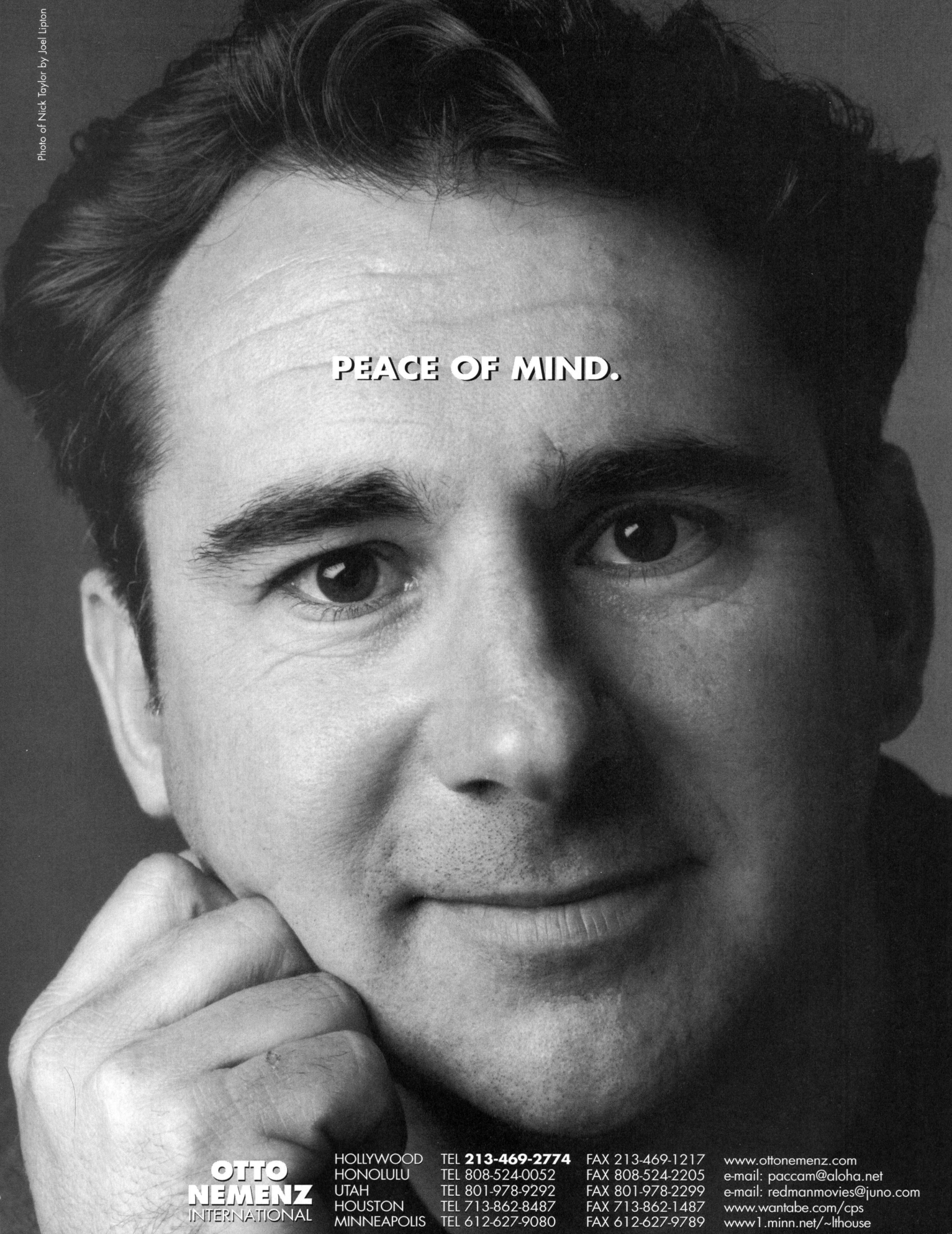
An expedient shooting tactic would have been to use long lenses, blur the backgrounds, and not bother about the accuracy of geographic detail, but neither director chose that route. Notes Bogdanovich, "I generally use wider lenses than most people. They're usually surprised — I use the 40mm lens a lot, on down." Freilich feels that long lenses had become so commonplace in television production that after a while it seemed "to be a cheat for a lack of functional and accurate backgrounds, whereas 25mm to 40mm lenses — which are closer to what the eye sees — enable the audience to look anywhere on a picture and focus on something. Of course, you then have to supply enough in that picture for the audience to look at. You also have to make sure that what's in the picture is accurate to the story you're telling and to the environment you're trying to present."

Gardner estimates that 80 percent of the film was shot with prime lenses, explaining, "When camera moves are tricky and involved, it's easier to use zooms, but there's definitely still a huge difference between prime and zoom lenses in terms of clarity — we even see it in our video rushes."

Locations that couldn't be duplicated in Toronto were shot in New York with a second-unit crew. Freilich's Manhattan shoot lasted two days, whereas Bogdanovich shot there for three days over the Christmas holidays to capture Gotham's festive atmosphere. Recounts Freilich, "The art department built a smaller version of those locations [in Toronto]. We shot the big pieces in New York and then came here to shoot closer pieces of coverage. Franco [de Cotiis] has such an amazingly accurate eye — he came on the second unit, took photographs of everything, and duplicated it here to such a degree that the people at Paramount and Showtime can't tell what was shot where." De Cotiis and the art department reproduced New York subway stations inside and out, as well as the streets of lower Manhattan, right down to particulars such as New York-style hot dog stands.

One of the filmmakers' biggest concerns is to give *The Naked City* a look distinct from the many other television cop shows set in New York, such as *NYPD Blue* and *Law & Order* (see page 52), which are known for their frenetic handheld camerawork. For the most part, Freilich avoided using handheld and Steadicam shots. While he finds such techniques undeniably "representative of the energy level of the city, it's also very stylized." On the other hand, Bogdanovich filmed approximately one-third of his feature on a Steadicam, noting, "The Steadicam gives you a lot of mobility, say, if you're moving people around the different rooms of a house. You don't have to lay track and it's quicker. I don't see any point in doing handheld stuff that is very jittery, because I don't like to call too much attention to the camera."

Gardner was quite impressed with Bogdanovich's blocking ability in the film's Steadicam sequences, which were shot by operator Rod Crombie. "It seems very easy for him to move actors around. We tried to get away from cutting back and forth between two talking heads, like you see on many TV shows. In this film, in a single shot, one guy would get up, wander around, somebody else would join him, and then the two would walk through the door — so in one take we'd done two double circles and some S-bends." The cinematographer concedes that such involved setups require elaborate planning and are difficult to illuminate, but he finds them a welcome chal-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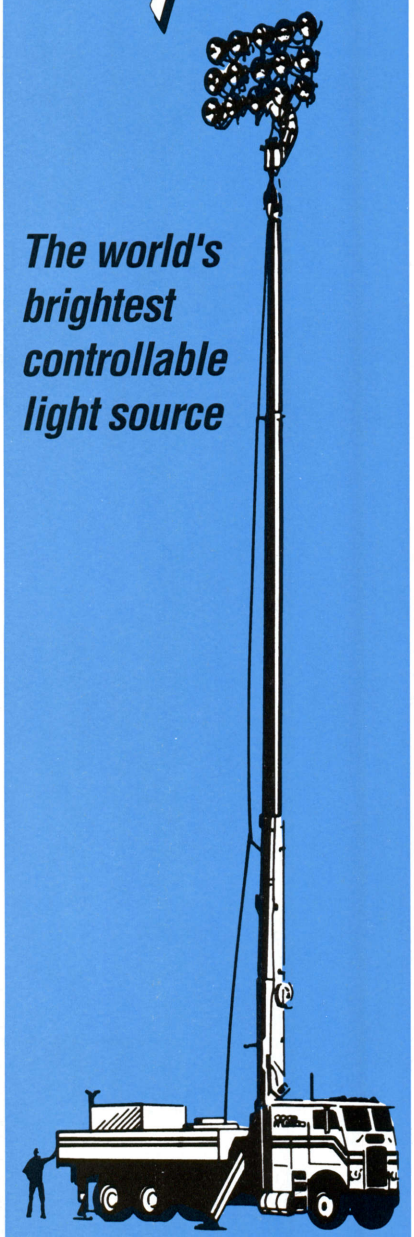
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lenge after the more than 900 commercials he has photographed, "where you easily end up with 28 cuts in 30 seconds."

For any subsequent *Naked City* movies, Freilich would like to bring in new filmmaking teams to shoot each installment. "Part of the fun is seeing what each individual cinematographer and director brings to this," he says. "I want to make each movie significantly different, because there's no sameness in New York City; you turn a corner and you're suddenly in a different world, and that's what you need to convey to the audience."

Here Comes the Bride
by David E. Williams

In recent years, such top Hong Kong directors as John Woo, Tsui Hark, Ringo Lam, and Stanley Tong have enjoyed working on U.S. features. However, while credit for their vaunted visual style — often a deft blend of virtuoso lighting, stunning colors, and kinetic camera moves — must be shared by the cinematographers with whom these directors have worked, few HK cameramen have managed to enter the American film arena.

One exception is Peter Pau, HKSC, who worked with Tsui Hark last year on the TriStar action film *Double Team*, and recently completed shooting Universal's comedy/horror picture *Bride of Chucky*. "I was the first cameraman from Hong Kong to shoot a U.S. studio picture," Pau says with pride. "And I believe Jingle Ma, who shot *Mr. Magoo* for Stanley Tong, was the second."

Pau was schooled in Canton, China. "My father sent me there for the discipline," he explains with a laugh. "The schools there were better than those in Hong Kong. But the following year, the Cultural Revolution began and I could not leave." Five years later, Pau was sent to study English, and then worked as a teacher for seven years. He eventually returned to Hong Kong, where his father, Pau Fong, was an established film actor/director. At 29, the younger Pau also felt that filmmaking was his calling; with the support of his family, Peter enrolled in film school at the San Francisco Art Institute, where he earned a BFA degree. Pau credits his training there with giving him a solid fine-arts background from which he could deviate into more experimental areas.

After returning to Hong Kong, Pau directed and photographed his first feature, *Temptation of Dance* (1984). "That gained me a lot of attention from other directors, who all wanted me to work with them as a director of photography," Pau recalls. Since then, he has photographed (or co-photographed) 26 pictures, including *The Greatest Lover, Saviour of the Soul, The Killer, To Be Number One, God of Gamblers, Swordsman, Misty* (which he also directed), and *Anna Magdalena*. "I've been lucky to practice [my craft] often," Pau submits. "The Hong Kong film industry grew up with limited budgets and limited amounts of production time. We had to learn how to work with great precision. I would have to account for every light, and even determine rental time in terms of hours! But that allowed us to maximize the visual presentation, and nothing was wasted. It was good training."

Pau's work has earned him numerous accolades, including three Hong Kong Film Awards for Best Cinematography and nine more nominations. One of these prizes was for *The Bride With White Hair* (1993), an epic period fantasy concerning a noble swordsman who romances a beautiful assassin. (Interestingly, Pau's father played a key role as the swordsman's stern mentor.) Opulently mounted and beautifully photographed, the picture was directed by Ronny Yu, whom Pau would later work with on *The Phantom Lover* and *Warriors of Virtue* before the duo teamed up again for *Bride of Chucky*.

Chucky is the third sequel to the 1988 fright hit *Child's Play*, and features a homicidal spirit trapped in the titular "body" of an oversized doll. A horror-genre romp, the comedic plot concerns the exploits of the diminutive killer (voiced by Brad Dourif) and his trailer-

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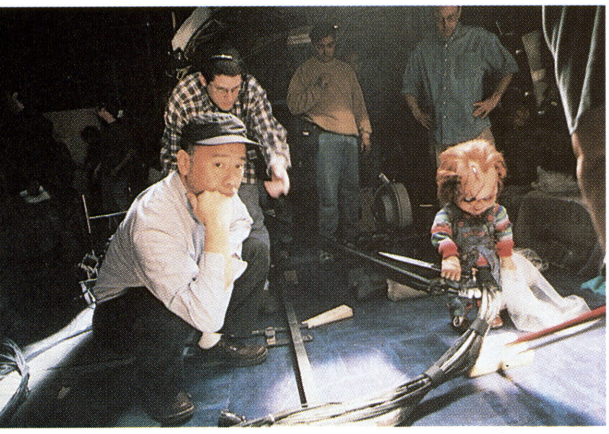

Above: Director of photography Peter Pau studies a setup as animatronics expert Kevin Yeager (in checked shirt) mans Chucky's "walking" rig. Pau found that small, soft sources were idea for lighting his meter-tall performer. At right: Tiffany (Jennifer Tilly) fondles her rubber-faced paramour. Pau commonly uses mixed color temperatures, but he strove for a less extreme blend on *Chucky*.

trash love interest, Tiffany, who later has her own soul transferred into a plastic plaything as well (she is portrayed in human form and later voiced by Jennifer Tilly). Hell-bent on obtaining new human bodies to occupy, the demented pair begin a murder-spree roadtrip through the Northeast.

Making his American film debut, Yu reasoned that having Pau and long-time film editor/second-unit director David Wu at his side would greatly aid him in dealing with an ambitious script, extensive effects work, a tight 52-day shooting schedule, and a brief post period. Both Universal and *Chucky*'s American producers enthusiastically backed his plan. "Ronny wanted me with him so that we could adapt some of the styles we had created on our other pictures," Pau reasons. "Fortunately, he is open-minded, which allows me to give him more than he expects in terms of angles, movement and lighting. Ronny appreciates good images and will say 'Yes!' right away to a good idea. This relationship was something we created while working on *The Bride With White Hair*." Because Pau joined the effects-heavy show just five weeks before shooting began, this mutual experience became even more important.

Chucky was shot in Toronto, Canada, and offered an array of photographic challenges for Pau. The first was the animatronic Chucky and Tiffany dolls, built and operated by Kevin Yeager Productions. Because of the extensive puppeteering required to bring the murderous mates to life, the film's sets had to be constructed on 5'-tall risers to allow clearance for the operators and mechanics below. Though Pau had experience in lighting and shooting such effects (largely gained on *Warriors of Virtue*, which featured numerous animatronic characters), the need for the platforms dictated that the *Chucky* stages could not be very large, leaving little workspace for the cinematographer, his crew, and their equipment. One such stage depicts Tiffany's Airstream-style trailer, which was built slightly oversized with flyaway walls and a detachable ceiling.

Despite this construction, the trailer set proved to be a difficult place to shoot, given the number to puppet shots required for the sequences staged within its confines. "The main difficulty came from the fact that there was no place for the lights," Pau recalls. "There was only about 12' of stage on each side of the set for us to work with. To remove sections of the set, all of our equipment had to be moved, so planning and preparation were very important. Within the trailer, everything was small and enclosed. Fortunately, most of the scenes set in the trailer needed a nighttime look, so moonlight could be the dominant source. The production designers helped us in that regard by putting many more side windows into the trailer set, as well as skylights, which allowed for interesting rain shadows and lightning effects. To create lightning, I always like to use Lightning Strikes units from three directions, which gives the impression that it is coming from everywhere."

Luckily, Pau's photographic plans for both Chucky and Tiffany seemed custom-made for close-quarters shooting. "*Chucky* is very different from the other fantasy films I have shot, because 'horror' is its main concept," the cinematographer explains. "This affected how the camera should see Chucky and Tiffany as a characters. After reading the script, I saw in my mind that we had to make them larger than life, not only in their size, but also in their expressions. In a way, they are the heroes of the film, and their personalities are bigger than those of the adult characters. But they are both less than three feet tall, very small in comparison to an adult, so we had to work hard to make them seem impressive. For example, whenever we saw Chucky's face, I wanted to make the audience jump back a bit. To do that, I tried to always shoot his close-ups with the camera extremely close to his face, usually using a 40mm lens, and often at a slightly low angle. On the screen, this

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gave Chucky the exact same presence that a grown man might have, and ensured that all of his facial expressions would be clear to the audience. Zeiss and Arri macro lenses allowed us to get very close."

Pau notes that his main stock for *Chucky* was Kodak's Vision 200T 5274, selected for its sharpness and fine grain. "We used the 74 for about 70 percent of the movie, and then used 5279 for some night exteriors," he reports. "For good blacks, I exposed the 74 normally, but rated the 79 at 400 ASA for a slight overexposure. I also worked at high T-stops. With the camera so close to the puppets, we had to have a T4, 5.6 or even T8 to ensure good depth of field. I wanted to make sure that the characters' entire faces were sharp." Pau adds that his deep-focus approach also helped the puppeteers (who sometimes numbered as many as 14 to operate both dolls), since forcing them to hit specific marks would have been difficult, and losing a good performance due to improper focus would have been tragic. Pau credits focus pullers Glenn Pineau and Phillipe Champion with making sure this was never an issue.

While shooting Chucky and Tiffany in the trailer, many of Pau's lighting units had to be set extremely close to the puppets, as he often used very soft sources to model their faces. Although a 18K Silver Bullet and numerous 4K HMIs were sometimes pounding through the windows to create a daylight look, Pau and his crew often employed small Kino Flo banks and Arri Pocket Pars for their detail work, since the scaled-down intensity of these lamps perfectly matched the size of the animatronic performers. "Conventional horror movies always use hard light with lots of shadows," Pau observes. "I'm trying to play this film a little differently. Ninety percent of *Chucky* takes place at night, so the audience might have had a hard time watching the film if it was all very high-contrast and dark. I still wanted to create a lot of contrast in the lighting with black blacks, but a *little* detail in the shadows." The cameraman credits the 5274 with aiding him in this endeavor, and adds that following some tests done at Deluxe Toronto (which also handled dailies), he has decided to use Kodak's "Clipper 2" stock for the release prints. "It enhances the blacks while retaining the shadow detail," he says.

One key sequence filmed in the trailer was Tiffany's death. While lounging in an ornate claw-foot bathtub, she is electrified after an irate Chucky tosses a television into the sudsy water. A switching system controlled the set's warm practicals, yellow "discharge" illumination from within the tub, and Lightning Strikes units positioned from each side and above, giving an extra stroboscopic charge to Jennifer Tilly's wild flailing.

Pau has frequently utilized extreme color-temperature contrast in his Hong Kong films, since he finds that the combination of ice-cold moonlight and warm firelight adds additional visual punch. "On *The Bride With White Hair*, we would often use straight HMIs with tungstens gelled with ½ CTO, creating an extreme spectrum for a fantasy-style effect. But on *Chucky*, we needed a greater sense of reality. Yes, there are dolls that have come to life, but everything else in the story is fairly realistic, and the film should look as normal and convincing as possible, but still interesting. I used contrasting colors, but I kept my HMIs down at about 4500°K by adding a ¼ CTS — making my moonlight a little less magenta — and left the tungstens straight. This made the contrast a little less extreme, even for something like Tiffany's death scene." The cameraman always protects such work by shooting a gray card to help ensure properly timed dailies.

Though Pau was able to bring in his entire 17-member HK camera crew for *Double Team* (which was shot in Italy and France), he relied on an all-Canadian team for *Chucky*. "Fortunately for me, I found that most of my Toronto crew was very good," Pau reports. "My gaffer, Chris Howard, was always prepared and asked good questions, and the key grip, Wayne Goodchild, was wonderful with all of the car work we had." The cine-

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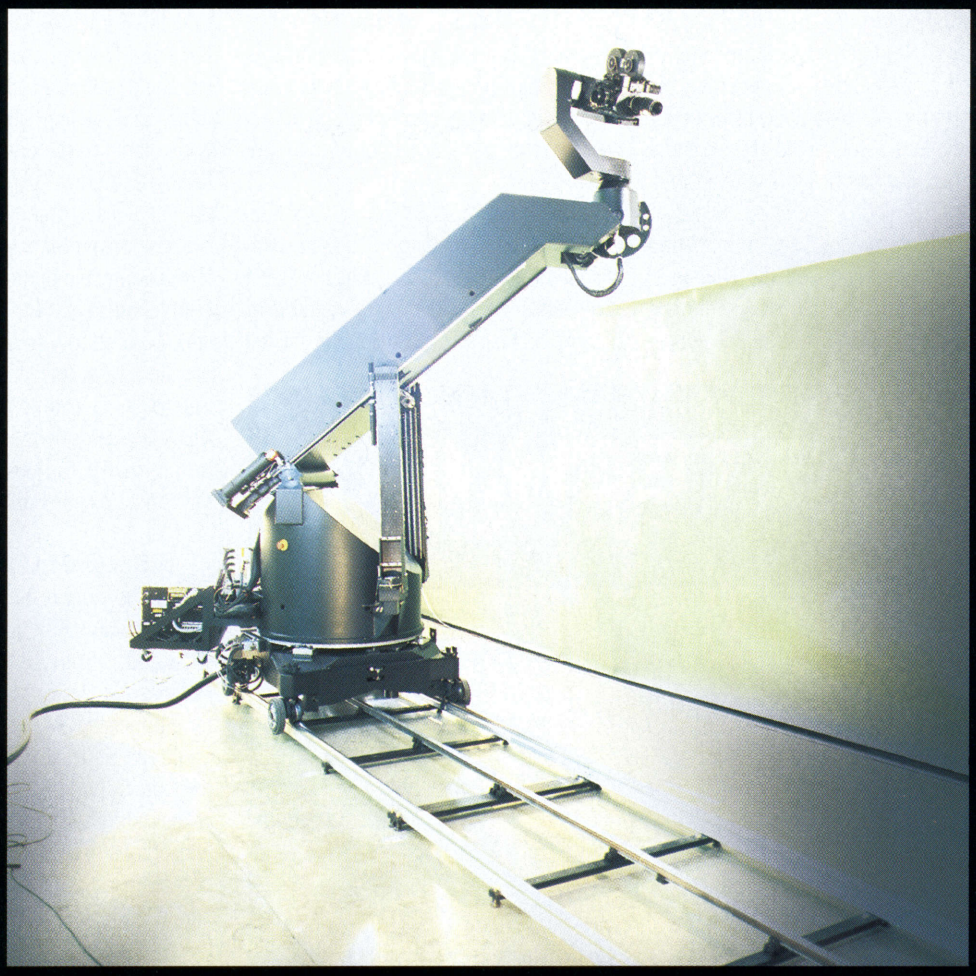

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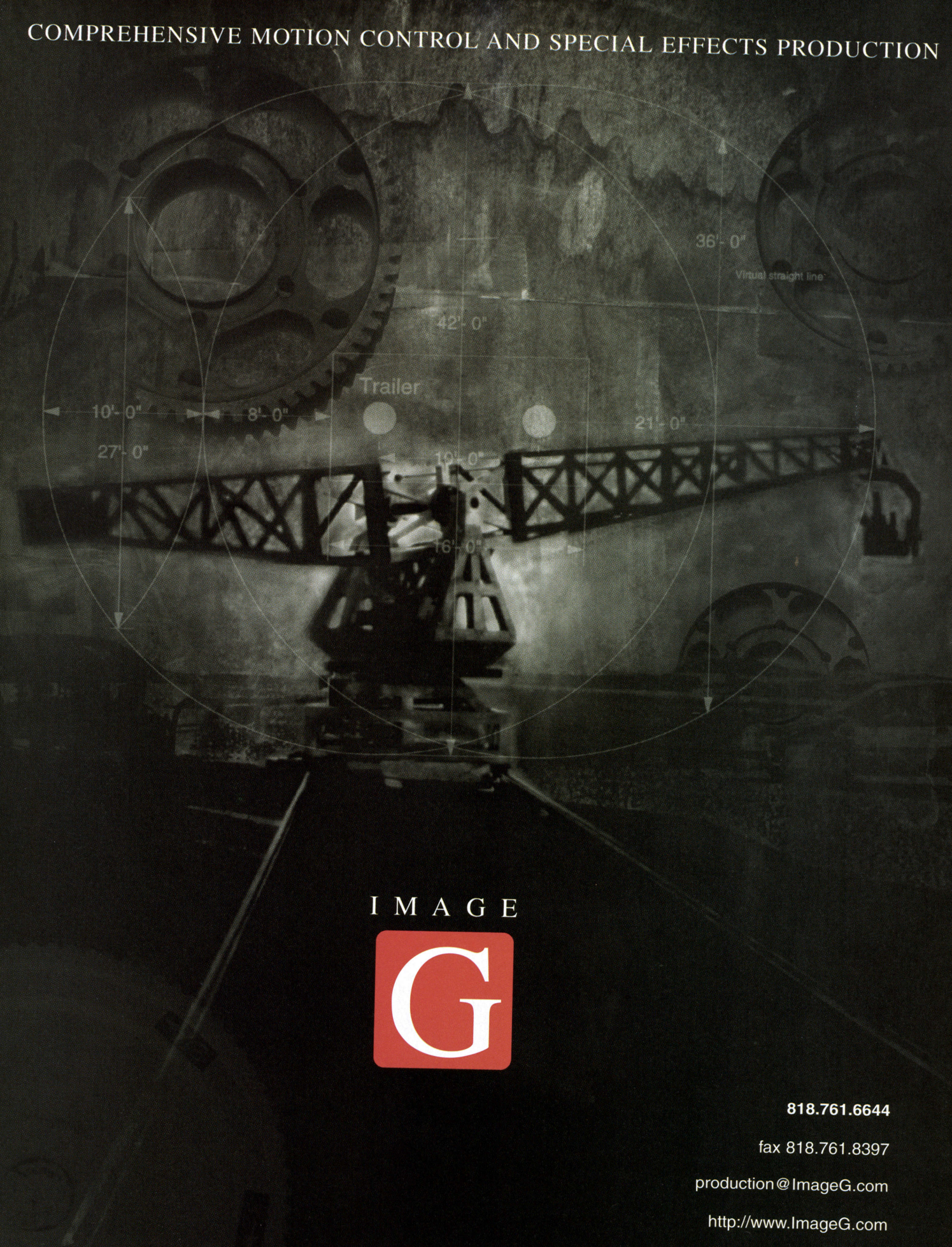
matographer reserves special praise for A-camera/Steadicam operator Keith Murphy; since Pau generally operates his own camera, he "was quite picky about using the lenses and angles that I particularly like, but Keith and I worked well together."

All of the camera and lighting equipment was supplied by William F. White Ltd. Pau notes, "It was extremely convenient to have one company supply both departments, and they were very helpful. We used Moviecam Compacts for this film primarily because they are small, lightweight and very quiet — which was all very important on our small sets."

Postproduction on *Chucky* is primarily being handled in Toronto, with visual effects supervisor Mike Muscal overseeing about 60 shots being done at Command Post's Toybox, Gajdecki Visual Effects, Perpetual Motion Pictures (in L.A.) and Nerve Effects, which includes rod and rig removal, greenscreen process work, and adding gory details to two particularly nasty death scenes. Later, Deluxe Toronto will handle the IN and IP duties. "This is the most critical period, because no matter how good your dailies look, the most important thing is the final print," Pau says. "The fine-grained, dark look we tried to create must really stand out, and it's at this stage that the image may pick up a little grain or contrast. Also, as I said, because this film has to be as realistic as possible, the images have to be as crisp as possible."

Upcoming WideScreen Fest

The fourth annual WideScreen Film Festival will be presented over two weekends, from October 23 through November 1, 1998, at the Karen Carpenter Performing Arts Center located on California State University's Long Beach campus. Celebrating the artistry, technical wizardry, and intimate majesty of widescreen filmmaking, the WFF is a one-of-a-kind event that presents only 70mm and other wide-format pictures. Concerned with film preservation and honoring the directors, cinematographers and other production professionals who have worked on widescreen movies, the WFF is again supported this year by associate presenters including the ASC, DGA, ACE, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Art Directors, the Motion Picture Editors Guild, and the International Cinematographers Guild. A panel discussion on widescreen cinematography is planned for Oct. 25 at 3 p.m., which will include ASC members Dean Cundey, Robert Primes, and Laszlo Kovacs. The WFF's screening schedule features two films directed by festival guest John Carpenter, *Halloween* (shot by Cundey) and *Vampires* (Gary Kibbe, ASC), as well as *The Haunting* (David Boulton), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (George Folsey, ASC), *Manhattan* (Gordon Willis, ASC), *Exodus* (Sam Leavitt, ASC), *Dirty Harry* (Bruce Surtees), *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (Tonino delli Colli), *Enter the Dragon* (Gil Hubbs, ASC),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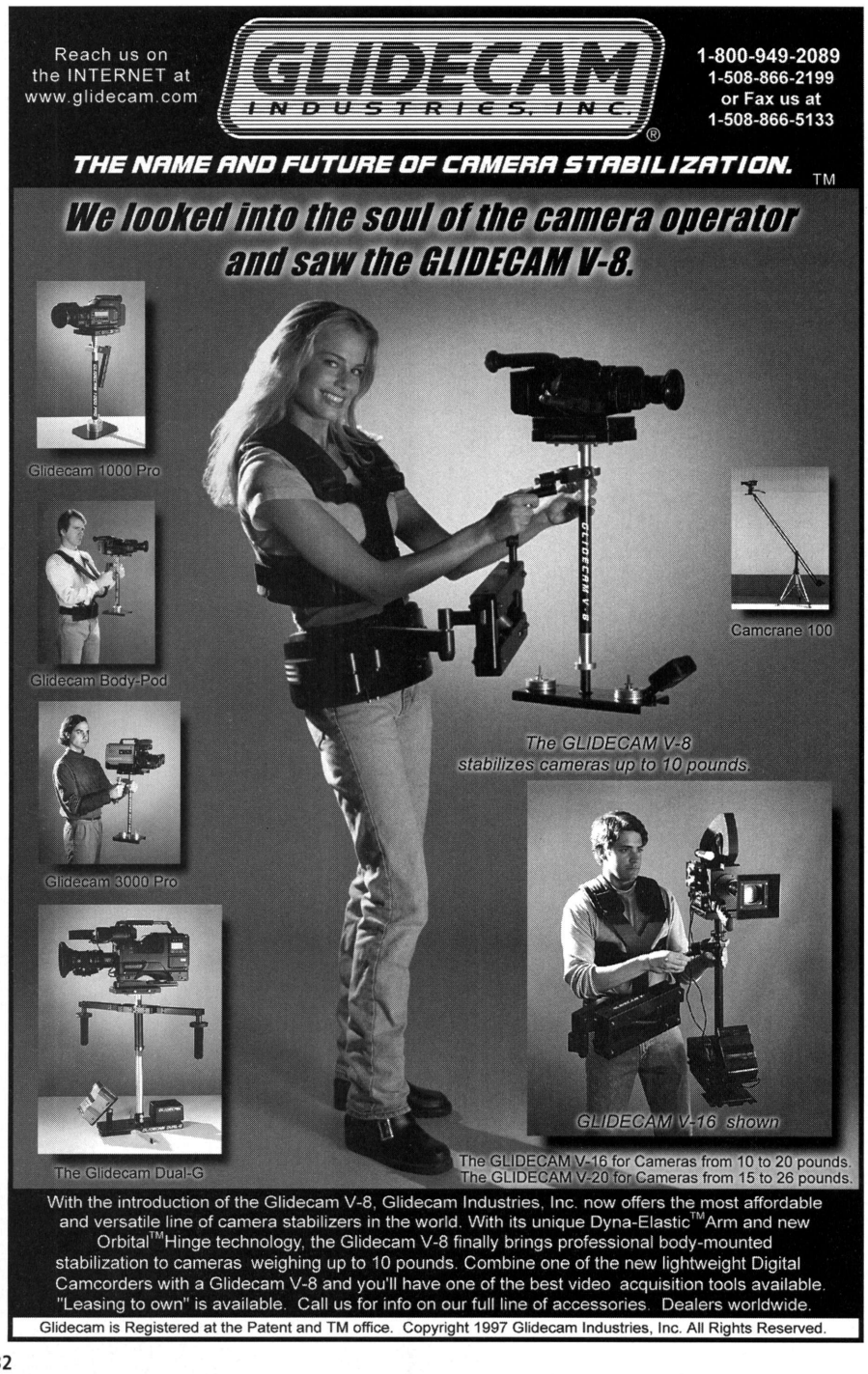

Alien (Derek Vanlint), *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC), *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (Franz Planer, ASC; Franz Lehy; Ralph Hammeras, ASC; Till Gabbani), *Porgy and Bess* (Leon Shamroy, ASC) and the first film to be shot in CinemaScope, *The Robe* (also photographed by Shamroy).

For ticket information, call (562) 985-7000.

African Film Commission Writing Contest

The African Film Commission (AFC) is soliciting submissions for its annual storytelling competition. The contest's purpose is to awaken interest in the African continent through stories that feature African settings and Afro-Global experiences.

The works to be considered should be feature-length screenplays based on African themes and characters, and must be no more than 130 pages in length. Contest rules specify that at least 60 percent of the story should be set somewhere in Africa. In addition to the prizes, the three finalists will receive the support of the AFC and its parent organization, the African Arts Foundation (AAF), in promoting the work to international film and television companies with an eye towards future production.

The winner of the storytelling competition will participate in the Pan-African Film and TV Festival held in the West African nation of Burkina Faso, and will receive a cash prize to be awarded at a ceremony in February of 1999. The second-prize winner will choose between a trip to the Pan-African Festival or cash alone, and the third prize winner will receive a cash prize. All scripts must be accompanied by a submission fee and postmarked no later than October 31, 1998.

To receive applications, writers can download them from the web (at www.africanartsfoundation.org) or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to AFC Storytelling, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 330 Beverly Hills, CA 90211.

ASC Awards Call for Entries

The American Society of Cinematographers has issued a call for entries in connection with the 13th Annual ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards for television episodic series, movies of the week/pilots, and miniseries. The competition in these three catagories is open to all cinematographers whose original narrative films were shown for the first time on U.S. broadcast, cable or satellite channels in 1998.

"Cinematographers who create original programming for television rarely get the recognition they deserve as artists from either the public or other people in the film industry," says ASC president Woody Omens. "Our main purpose is to recognize and honor their achievement of artistic excellence in narrative cinematography."

The nominees for the feature film category in the ASC Awards will be determined by the active membership of the ASC.

The ASC Awards is the only competition of its type in which cinematographers are nominated and their work is judged solely by their peers who are members of their ASC. "The artistic role played by cinematographers generally isn't obvious to the audience," Omens explains, "because the public tends to associate beautiful images with everything except the cinematographer. A director of photography's contributions should be judged by the total emotional impact that the production evokes. What does the imagery contribute to telling the story? Most people don't understand that story interpretation is the essence of this art. That's why it takes a cinematographer to judge another cinematographer's work."

Entries for the ASC Awards competition must be submitted by January 4, 1999. There is no entry fee. The ASC Awards banquet will be held on February 21, 1999, at the Century Plaza Hotel. For more information and entry forms, contact Patty Armacost by phone at (323) 969-4333, or by fax at (323) 876-4973, or visit the ASC website at www.cinematographer.org. ■

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anatomy of a shot: SNAKE EYES

Don't miss the latest web-exclusive article available only on the internet at **www.cinematographer.com.**

Step behind the camera for an exclusive look at the makeup and lighting tests that cinematographer Stephen H. Burum, ASC conducted before shooting Brian De Palma's latest suspense extravaganza.

For ***Snake Eyes***, Burum shot a series of hair, make-up and lighting tests with actress Carla Gugino, who stars in the movie. The tests allowed Burum to study the way the light played on Gugino's face, and also enabled make-up artist Lucille Demers and hairdresser Rejean Forget to experiment with the different looks the actress would have in the movie.

Burum's comments on one of the makeup tests:
"You can see that this is shot more or less the butterfly position. You can still see the nose shadow." In this particular shot, Gugino looks directly toward the key light, with the shadow side of her face toward the camera. The darkness on the side of her face, explains Burum, makes the face look taller and skinnier, whereas it would look fuller if the light came from the other side. "What I'm trying to discover here is what her cheekbone looks like…You notice how in all the old movies, how all the actresses are always looking toward heaven? Well, they're always looking toward the key light."

To see what Burum has to say about each makeup test, as well as his thoughts on makeup and costuming in general, log onto **www.cinematographer.com** and visit the Studio.

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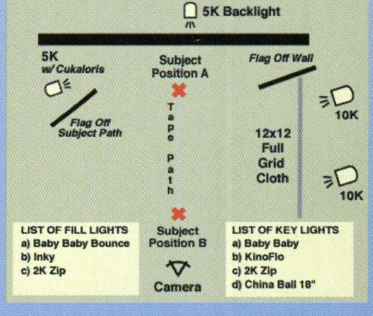


Samurai Tactics

Photos courtesy of United Artists and MGM Company.

Director John Frankenheimer teams with accomplished cinematographer Robert Fraisse on *Ronin*, a gritty action thriller that makes the most of its French settings.

by Ron Magid

Photography by Patrick Camboulive

The title of John Frankenheimer's latest picture, *Ronin*, refers to renegade, masterless samurai warriors who turn mercenary. The film's heroes, a loose-knit band of former Cold War intelligence agents and experts in such fields as demolition, weapons and extortion, are led by ultra-professionals Sam (Robert De Niro) and Vincent (Jean Reno). Their mission: to recapture a mysterious aluminum case for an unidentified client whose liaison is the beautiful but manipulative Deirdre (Natascha McElhone). What the case contains and why the client wants it remain a mystery throughout; as with the best suspense-film MacGuffins (a term which refers to a mysterious story element that drives a plot forward), it ultimately doesn't matter. The fact that people are willing to pay for the case with their lives says it all.

Having carved out a career that has known as many valleys as peaks, Frankenheimer himself has more in common with some of *Ronin*'s outsiders than he might care to admit. The director stunned audiences in the 1960s with his suspenseful handling of *Seconds* (see *AC* Nov. '97), *Seven Days in May* and *Birdman of Alcatraz*, but his output over the last few decades has been erratic. His most recent feature, the controversial remake of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (*AC* Sept. '96), divided audiences and critics who couldn't decide if it was a masterpiece or a mess. (Frankenheimer believes it will be an acknowledged classic in 20 years.)

Interestingly, Frankenheimer, who got his start in television in the 1950s, has had considerably more success since returning to the medium in recent years to helm several well-received movies for Turner Network Television, including the heartbreaking Civil War epic *Andersonville* and this year's multiple-Emmy-nominated production *George Wallace*.

Frankenheimer's deft handling of *Ronin*'s taut psychological tension, split-second betrayals, and explosive action proves that the director is at the top of his form on the big screen as well. He describes his take on his latest cinematic thriller in terms of his recent television features: "It's got the same kind of style and photographic approach that I've been taking in some of my better cable work. In terms of camera movement, I was trying to create a heightened reality, which is the opposite of a stylized approach. Reality itself is boring; reality is an Andy Warhol movie, but this is *heightened* reality. There are a lot of wide angles and tremendous depth of field, and a lot of the shots have a pretty high key, which sometimes [required a stop of] f8."

Aiding and abetting Frankenheimer on the picture was French cinematographer Robert Fraisse, best known for his work with acclaimed director Jean-Jacques Annaud. The cinematographer's lengthy association with Annaud has yielded some unforgettable imagery, as seen in *The Lover* (for which Fraisse earned an Academy Award nomination), the Imax 3-D film *Wings of Courage* (*AC* Aug. '96) and last year's *Seven Years in Tibet* (Nov. '97 ASC website posting),

Opposite: Sam (Robert De Niro), an expert in international espionage, springs into action. This page: Gregor (Stellan Skarsgård), Vincent (Jean Reno) and Deirdre (Natascha McElhone) cluster around Sam to study photographs of their target.

Gregor attempts to escape the chaotic aftermath of a frenzied car chase as Sam and Vincent (top of frame) take aim from above. The film's chases were shot "live" (with no process or computer-graphics work), and multiple cameras were often deployed to capture the action with short lenses.

Samurai Tactics

but their output is a far cry from Frankenheimer's gritty domain. Not surprisingly, the latter was more attracted by Fraisse's work in *Citizen X*, a chilling real-life police thriller he had shot for HBO concerning the hunt for a Russian serial killer. After viewing the telefilm, Frankenheimer was convinced that the director of photography had the discipline to tackle the more than 2,000 individual setups he planned for *Ronin*. "I saw that Robert knew how to work within the confines of a schedule, and knew the demands of an American production," the director states. "While French filmmakers use a smaller crew and take a lot longer to film, we take these big crews and really have to move. We shot this movie in 78 days, and a lot of the schedule was devoted to the action sequences. We then had 30 days of 'second-unit' work, which I did myself with Robert and [Steadicam operator] David Crone. There was no real second unit on the picture; we did it all ourselves."

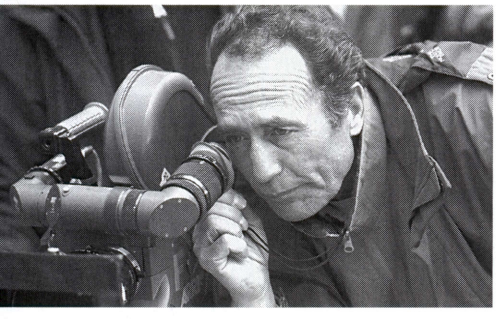
"John does make a lot of shots; I did more setups on this film than any other that I've done."

— Cinematographer Robert Fraisse on director John Frankenheimer's shooting style.

Working with Frankenheimer was an eye-opening experience for Fraisse. The director had a very specific set of do's and don'ts in mind for *Ronin*. "When we started working on the movie, we talked about the style, and John said, 'I want a lot of setups, I want the shots to be very short, and I want to work with very short focal lengths,'" Fraisse recalls. "John wanted this

movie to appear onscreen almost like reportage, as if we shot had things that were really happening, so we didn't want to be too sophisticated. Instead, we tried to convey an ambiance, an atmosphere. Also, he didn't want too many colors, so we avoided colors in the sets, exteriors and costumes as much as we could. Right from the beginning, we decided that we would never see something red. Nobody could be dressed in red, no car could be red — there would never, be anything red in the movie! In fact, he said, 'I can't shoot this movie in black-and-white, but I would like to have the least amount of color possible.'"

Fraisse hit on a means of giving the director what he wanted through a clever use of film stock and lab work. "Since John didn't want any color, I suggested that we do a special process using Kodak's Vision 500T 5279," Fraisse says. "After rating the stock at 250 ASA, which overexposed it one stop, we then underdeveloped it, reducing the contrast and desaturating the colors. I also knew that we were going to shoot in France during the winter, when it gets dark at 5 o'clock. I needed to be able to shoot as late as possible, so I made the decision to use the 500 ASA stock for the whole movie. I generally use 5279 only for interiors on stages and on location, or when I shoot exterior night scenes. When I shoot outside, I use a slower stock. For instance, on *Seven Years in Tibet,* I shot all the exteriors with 5245, which is a very nice, very fine-grain stock. But I chose to shoot *Ronin* on the 500T stock because I knew that with the process we were using, the stock would be only 250 ASA, which is not a lot when it gets dark early and the weather is very gray during the day. Very often, I was shooting at almost full aperture — T2.3 or 2.5. At those moments, I thought I had been very wise to choose a fast stock that normally isn't used for daylight exterior scenes."



While Fraisse assembled an array of cameras to handle *Ronin*'s rigorous photographic demands, including Panaflexes for dialogue scenes and Arriflex 435s and 35-IIIs for the film's elaborate car-chase sequences, the cinematographer was surprised to learn just how much Frankenheimer loves to utilize the Steadicam. "Aside from the car chases, we used the Steadicam for half the shots in the movie," says Fraisse. "John uses the Steadicam the way others would use a normal camera. It's faster and more convenient than putting down rails and dollies — as long as you have a really good camera operator. Fortunately, I had a great Steadicam operator in David Crone. This is the fourth movie he's done with John, who told me, 'After you meet this guy, you won't want to work with any other.' He was right; David was really amazing. Even when John asked him to do very difficult shots, and I was thinking, 'John is wrong, it's not possible, he won't be able to do it,' David did it. He's very strong and the camera was totally stable, so you can't guess that the shots were done with a Steadicam. David also understood the lighting problems, and he has an incredible sense of framing. Some Steadicam operators never frame properly — they just get the actors in frame. But David composed frames very nicely."

The film's opening sequence, a lengthy setpiece in a typical Parisian bar in Montmartre, is a prime example of Frankenheimer's complex editing style. The scene introduces major characters Vincent and Deirdre waiting tensely inside as Sam prowls the street outside, casing the joint and hiding a gun in an alley. Because of the intricate staging inside and out, the bar was built as a practical interior/exterior set on a huge Paris soundstage. As Fraisse recalls, "There was a real bar in Montmartre which was much too small to shoot within, but we used the facade for certain shots, as well as the long flight of stairs coming down alongside it. All of the shots inside the bar were filmed on the stage. The bar itself was small, so the set had wild walls. It was built on a huge stage, because when we were inside the bar, we wanted to see the street.

Below, left: At the eyepiece of a Arri 435, director of photography Robert Fraisse checks his framing. Right: Frankenheimer (center) consults with the cameraman on location in Paris. Says Fraisse, "John wanted this movie to appear onscreen almost like reportage, as if we had shot things that were really happening, so we didn't want to be too sophisticated. Instead, we tried to convey an ambience, an atmosphere."

Samurai Tactics

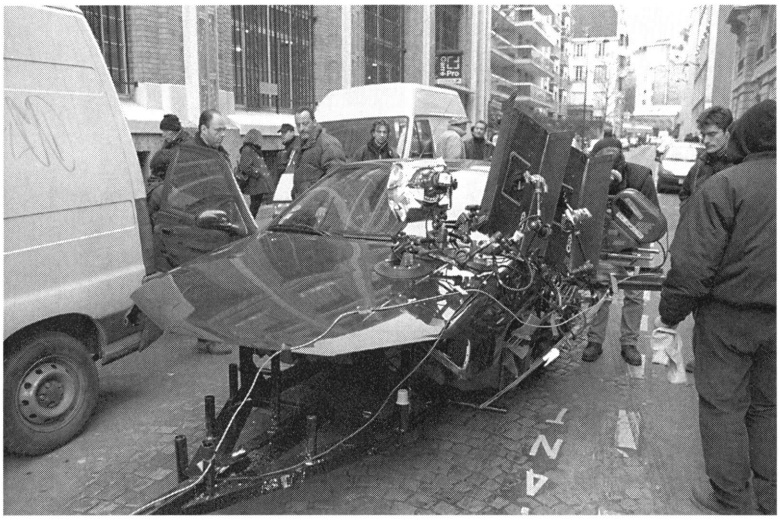
Above: Crew members mobilize to track actress Natascha McElhone, with Steadicam operator David Crone riding an ATV rig. Below: A look at one of the film's convincing car rigs. This particular "trailer rig" was used to capture close-ups of Sam (De Niro) in hot pursuit of his enemies. Kino Flo banks offer fill while a 435 is used to get the shot.

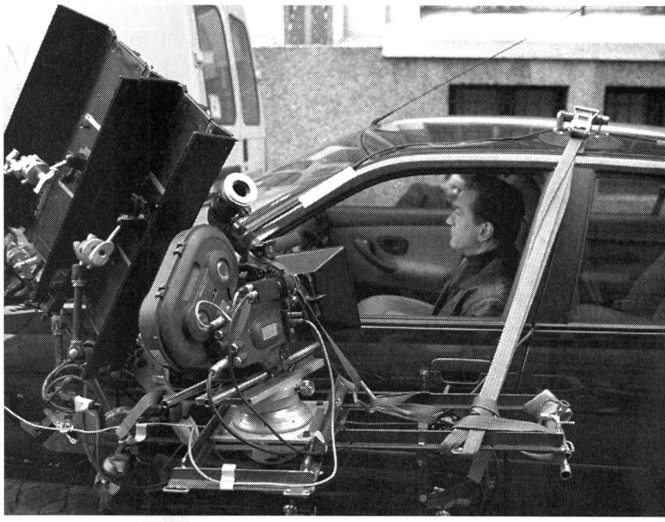
Also, there were shots where we appeared to be outside in the street, but were actually shooting inside the soundstage."

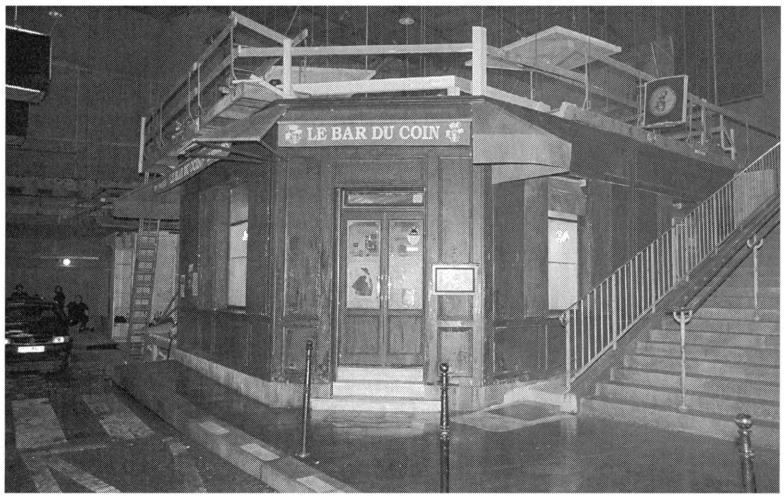
Frankenheimer's insistence on shooting the interior of the small bar with a Steadicam and short lenses created countless challenges in the cramped space, where the director's approach gave new definition to "in-your-face" cinematography. "When you shoot for John Frankenheimer, you get very close to the actors," says Fraisse. "He'll use a Steadicam and a 21mm lens to shoot almost a close-up, so you can imagine how close the camera is to the actors! We often shot with the 17.5mm, 21mm, 24mm and 32mm lenses, which made lighting the actors and sets very tricky. As soon as we started panning with the 21mm, the whole set was in the frame, so it was tough to hide the lights.

"There was only one way to light actors, which was to cross-light and top-light them. I used 1K lights with small Chimeras on them above the set, and a few side lights on scaffolds around the set. I knew that with a Steadicam I would have no opportunity to put lights on stands, so most of the light was actually coming through holes in the ceiling, which was very low and had a few wooden beams that I also hid lights behind. We also had practicals on the walls, which dictated the warm lighting inside the bar. The Chimeras were very convenient because their light was very soft; you need fewer flags to protect the walls against spill, which is always a problem when you work with diffused lighting in a small set. Normally, with the combination of a short focal-length lens and the Steadicam so close to the actors, you can forget about putting something behind the camera for fill, because you'll get camera shadows all the time. But David Crone was very experienced, and understood the lighting problems perfectly; he knew exactly what was possible and what was not."

Fraisse faced more challenges while shooting the exterior of the bar and its environs, which involved the real location in some shots and the massive stagebound re-creation in others. "We built the bar set up to the first floor, as well as the last few steps of the high stairwell that ran along the side of the bar," Fraisse explains. "At the beginning of the sequence, we wanted to see Robert De Niro coming down the real steps. We had to match the lighting of the night scenes shot in the real street with those that were done on stage. When we were shooting outside, I put lights on a Condor or asked the people living in the nearby buildings to let me put lights in their windows. Then, in the soundstage, I tried to put almost the same lights in the same places, so the audience would not be able to see the difference. Fortunately, it was an amazing set —







very well built, just incredible. In the Montmartre area of Paris, the walls have a very old patina. Our production design team [led by Gerard Viard] perfectly aged the walls and put real cobblestones in the stage street, and it worked. It looked real."

Although Frankenheimer required a lot of setups, Fraisse paradoxically found the director to be very economical in his shooting. "John doesn't really do establishing shots like most directors," Fraisse explains. "He knows what he wants and what he's actually going to put in the movie. He used to be an editor, so he never shoots something he knows he won't use. But John does make a lot of shots; I did more setups on this film than any other that I've done."

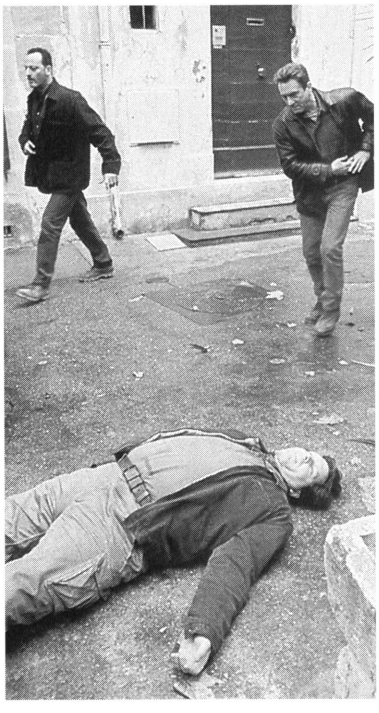
Most of those setups were for *Ronin*'s three extraordinary car-chase scenes, which recall the glories of *Bullitt, The French Connection* and Frankenheimer's own unique variation on the genre, the boat chase in *Black Sunday*. But the director was thinking of another of his films when he mapped out his approach for *Ronin*. "I did the whole thing in the style of *Grand Prix* [see *AC* June '67], with the camera mounts in about the same places," the director says. "We had great drivers, and we did some shots with the actors in the real cars during the scenes," Frankenheimer says. "I got the English right-hand-drive versions of the cars we were going to shoot. That way, we could have the stunt driver on the right, driving the car, and a phony steering wheel on the left for the actors, so we could photograph the actors 'driving' the cars in a lot of cases. We picked Jean-Claude Lagniez as the stunt coordinator and driver, and he brought in two colleagues, Michel Neugarten and Jean-Pierre Jarrier. Together, Lagniez and Neugarten had won their category at Le Mans the year before, and Jarrier was a Formula-One driver. Those guys were really fabulous. I'd tell Lagniez what I wanted to do, and he'd figure out how to do it."

Once again, Frankenheimer was very specific with Fraisse about how he wanted the car chases handled photographically. Since the shots were to be "live" (with no process or computer-graphics work), multiple cameras would be used to simultaneously capture the action with short lenses. "Most of the time, we used three or four normal cameras, plus one or two remote crash-box cameras, which were cheap cameras with cheap lenses inside very heavy and resistant metal blimp. With that kind of camera, we got very brief but incredible shots," Fraisse reports. "When you shoot car chases with long focal lengths, you can shoot for 20 seconds, because you see the car far into the depth and you can let it come toward camera. But with very short focal lengths, the cars cross the frame very fast, which I think is a very strong effect. We also shot in Nice, which is an old city in the South of France with very narrow streets, so the shots automatically didn't last a long time. We needed to shoot many setups to have the continuity of the cars going from one street to another."

Another variable dictating the quickness of the cutting was the speed of the cars themselves. Says Frankenheimer with a grin, "If I'm going to do a car chase, I'm going to do a car chase that's going to make somebody think about whether or not they want to do another one!"

Left: A look at the stagebound re-creation of the Montmartre bar which served as the setting for the film's opening sequence. Fraisse had to match the lighting of the night scenes shot on the real street with his work on the set. Below: A Super Technocrane is used to capture action at a French intersection.

Samurai Tactics



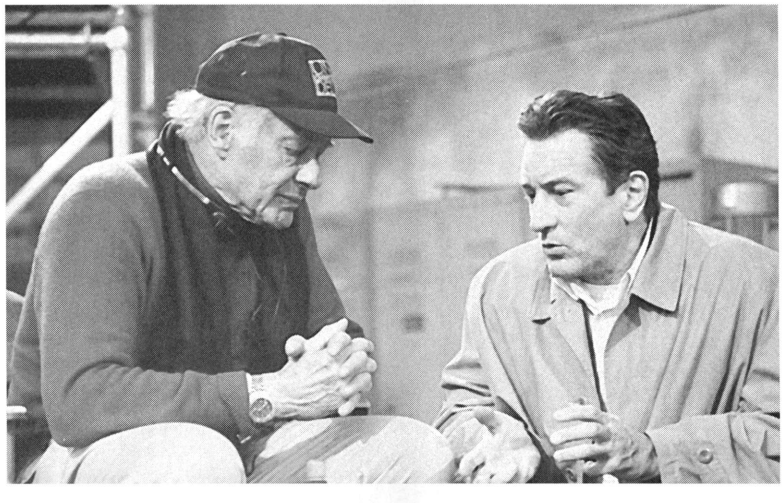
Clockwise from near right: Sam and Vincent pass by the corpse of a fallen team member; a tilting trailer rig provides an exciting angle during a chase scene; Frankenheimer and De Niro discuss the nuances of a scene.

To ensure that *Ronin*'s chases would keep audiences on the edge of their seats, Frankenheimer insisted that the cars travel at full speed. "It was the first time in my career I worked with cars going so fast," Fraisse admits. "John said, 'When I shot *Grand Prix*, I never cheated on the speed, so I don't want to cheat the speed now.' Sometimes, but not very often, we did shoot at 22 frames per second, or 21. The secret was using very good race-car drivers, who were used to driving at 300 kilometers [186 miles] per hour. It was amazing how fast those cars went — sometimes 160 kilometers [roughly 100 miles] per hour, even though the roads were narrow with a lot of curves."

Since the actors were "driving" the cars in some shots, lighting for the chase sequences became an especially critical consideration. "Generally, there are devices you use when actors are supposed to be driving," Fraisse explains. "For instance, you might have a moving car, with the camera and a small generator to feed your lights, towing the car with the actors. When John told me, 'I don't want to tow the cars; I want the actors to really drive the cars,' I said, 'Oh my God, how am I going to light them?' The cars were going very fast, so I couldn't put any gear on the roof, and it would've been a nightmare to put a generator in the hood. Instead, I decided to go with small 200-watt HMIs, which were fed by batteries in the trunk and fixed onto the hood or in different places outside the [actors'] car. Inside the car, I used small 2' or 1½' Kino Flo daylight fluorescent lights, which now run very well on batteries."

For Frankenheimer, helming the chase scenes was as much about storyboarding as shooting from the hip. "I tried to draw it out as much as I could with the storyboard artist, Ted Boontaniquit," the director says. "I've worked with Ted about four times before, so he knows how I shoot. There were hundreds of drawings of what we wanted to do, but once you get to the actual location, you use the drawings as a guide and improvise on them. There was a lot of stuff that I just figured out on the spot. On the other hand, there was a lot of planning. We had tons of camera mounts that had to be prepared for forward, side and three-quarter back angles; we also had a special unit to put them on the cars. There was no process or green-screen on this picture."

The mounts were built by Jean-Pierre Mas, a veteran of French director Luc Besson's films who has collaborated with Fraisse for 10 years. Two-shots of actors conversing in a car, with the camera mounted on the side window or shooting through the front windshield, were shot with the produc-



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Right: Armed with a bazooka, De Niro emerges from the sunroof of well-equipped camera car. Below: A crane arm swoops in behind two cars jockeying for position on a hairpin curve. To ensure that *Ronin*'s car chases would keep audiences on the edge of their seats, Frankenheimer insisted that the cars travel at full speed.

tion's Panaflex cameras, just like any other dialogue scene in the film. For all other MOS shots, however, Fraisse used Arri 435 or 35-III cameras. "I used them for the shots that didn't require sound because they are much smaller, lighter and less expensive, so it's easier to put them on a mount. Very often, we put two cameras on a car at the same time: one on the hood or trunk, and one on the side. Because the shots were almost always short, we didn't need a 1,000-foot magazine; a 400-foot magazine was enough."

Cars equipped with camera mounts went barreling through the cobblestoned back streets of Paris, twisting through the winding roads of Nice or careening down a French freeway on the wrong side of the road at rush hour — minus the cinematographer. "The problem with car chases like these," Fraisse laments, "is that most of the time, you are not in the car. You equip the car with cameras and lights and just let it go. When the sky is blue and the sun is bright, it's no problem — you set the f-stop and you know, more or less, that it will be the right one for the whole shot. Sometimes, though, the sun is going in and out of the clouds. In those situations, you set the stop, the car pulls away, the camera is shooting without you, and the sun comes out. You know you're going to be overexposed, but you can't do anything about it."

Even when Fraisse was shooting the cars objectively from a distance, the twisting roads and France's changeable winter light demanded hair-trigger finessing. "Quite often, the cars would go from one street to another, and the light was totally different from one to the next. I therefore had to change the f-stop while it happened," Fraisse remembers. "Fortunately, the high speeds of the cars helped. When I had a three-stop difference between two streets, I didn't open the iris three stops; I opened it only two stops, so the second street would still look darker than the first, which was better for the ambiance of the movie."

For Frankenheimer, shooting *Ronin* in France was a welcome return to his adopted country and feature filmmaking. "I've made a lot of movies there: *The Train, Grand Prix, The French Connection II,* and *The Impossible Object* [a.k.a. *Story of a Love Story*]. I also used to live in France, so it's really my second country. That familiarity really paid off on this project; I knew practically every location I wanted to shoot in. I loved doing the picture, and I hope it shows on the screen." ■

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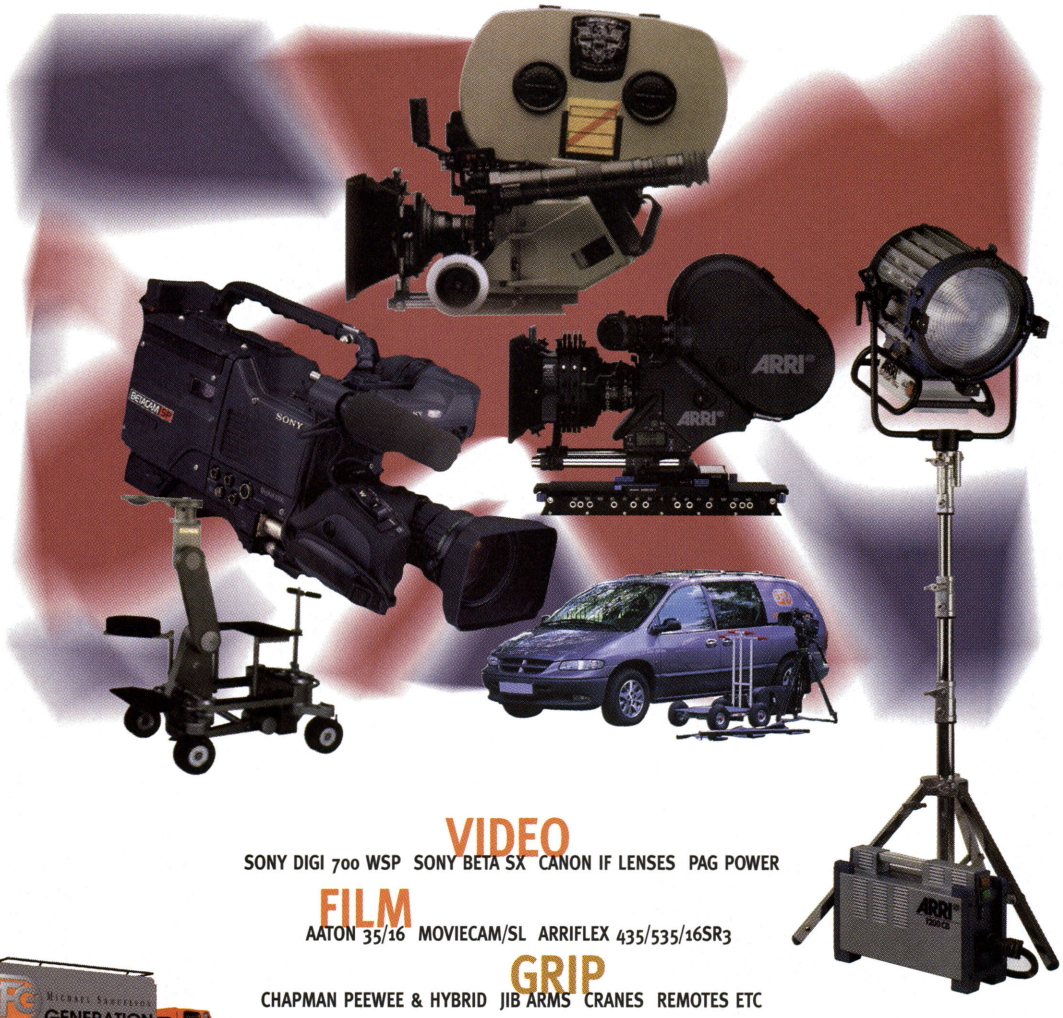

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Card Sharks

In *Rounders*, director John Dahl and cinematographer Jean Yves Escoffier explore New York's secretive, subterranean poker scene.

by Jean Oppenheimer

Photography by John Clifford

Director John Dahl (*Red Rock West, The Last Seduction*) is known for his stunningly atmospheric neo-noir thrillers, but he speculates that, in terms of the look, *Rounders* may be his darkest film to date — even though, as he quips, "No one gets shot and no one dies." A character-driven drama set in the high-stakes world of New York's underground poker clubs, the story takes place predominantly at night or in dimly lit bars and card clubs. To obtain the look and tone he wanted, Dahl turned to French-born cinematographer Jean Yves Escoffier (*Les Amants du Pont Neuf, Trois Hommes et un Couffin, Good Will Hunting*).

Born in Lyon, Escoffier knew by the age of 7 that he wanted to be a cameraman. "My parents were activist Catholics and had a passion for filmmaking," he recounts. "They would organize screenings for people in the neighborhood, and we'd watch the movies at home." Escoffier fulfilled his dream, studying cinematography at L'ecole Louis Lumiere in Paris.

His first film as a camera assistant starred the legendary Jean Gabin and a young, up-and-coming actor named Gerard Depardieu. Escoffier's credits as a director of photography include several pictures with Leos Carax, including the widely admired *Les Amants du Pont Neuf.* His first American picture was Nick Kazan's *Dream Lover*, which he followed with *Excess Baggage, The Crow: City of Angels, Gummo,* and *Grace of My Heart.* The cameraman recently wrapped Tim Robbins's *The Cradle Will Rock.*

Rounders is about a young man with a talent for playing poker who must choose between his passion for the game and a more legitimate road to success via law school. At the beginning of the film, Mike McDermott (Matt Damon) bets his entire bankroll of $30,000 in a high-stakes game against seedy Russian card shark Teddy KGB (John Malkovich) — and loses it all. He gives up poker and enters law school, which he attends until his best friend, Worm (Edward Norton), a card cheat convicted of credit-card fraud, is released from prison and has to pay off a huge gambling debt. McDermott returns to the game to help him win the needed money.

The movie is set — and was shot — almost entirely in New York City, where underground card clubs abound, albeit clandestinely. The filmmakers wanted a rich, dark look — very atmospheric, but nothing too clever or designed. Walls and clothes were kept dark; yellows, reds and browns were the predominant colors used. Escoffier relied heavily on practicals; one scene, set in Teddy KGB's club, utilized 47 of them. "I like dark walls because film is about people; each time you have a bright wall, the wall is stronger than the character. I like the reverse [situation]," explains the cameraman. "I also like the lighting to be in intimate relationship with the set. I don't like anything artificial. The ideal situation would be if we could shoot the way the light is naturally, but obviously, if you do that, you would have too many cosmetic problems, and it would be impossible to read the subtle expressions in the actors' eyes. However, I like to go as close to natural as possible. I like to design the tension, the darkness and the brightness the way life would give it to you."

Escoffier made extensive use of Kino Flos on *Rounders*, carrying 12 Wall-O-Lites as well as two full carts of other Kinos. Just before production got underway, Kino Flo came out with a 2900° Kelvin bulb, which is a bit warmer than their tungsten fixture. Escoffier replaced all of his 3200s with the newer bulbs.

Kino Flos can be set up quickly, and they also save an enormous amount of grip work. The Wall-O-Lites consists of 10 fluorescent tubes mounted in a reflector-backed frame, making a perfect square of illumination and providing a uniform direction of light. To keep the light from spilling everywhere, Kino Flo came up with the idea of putting an egg crate over the entire fixture. "Normally, you would put a diffusion frame around it and use the source like a lamp," explains Escoffier. "But it spills everywhere and the grips have to put flags all around." The egg crate eliminates all of the cutting and flagging. For reasons Escoffier can't fathom, Wall-O-Lites aren't used as widely as one

Opposite and above: Russian card shark Teddy KGB (John Malkovich) deals out a hand. Warm soft light was used throughout the film, with cameraman Jean Yves Escoffier routinely relying on Kino Flo fixtures fitted with 2900°K tubes.

Photos courtesy of Miramax.

Card Sharks

Worm (Edward Norton, right) lures reformed gambler Mike McDermott (Matt Damon) back into the game. Escoffier rendered all exteriors to be blue and cold.

might expect; he has been a fan since their introduction back in the early 1990s, and on *Rounders*, they were used for almost every scene.

Escoffier places as much emphasis on production design as he does on lighting, and he always works in unusually close collaboration with his production designers. On *Rounders*, Rob Pearson (who worked with Dahl on *Red Rock West* and *Unforgettable*) created a world of yellows, reds, ochres and browns. "We wanted the [film's interiors] to be warm," remarks the New Zealand-born designer. "I wanted to [eliminate] all blue and green from the movie's palette, except during exterior scenes, when everything feels blue and cold.

"Everyone in New York paints their apartments white because they're so small," Pearson continues. "While that was 'real,' it's not what we wanted to do. Instead, we made the apartment that Mike shares with his girlfriend, Jo (Gretchen Mol), darker than normal. I painted the walls red, as well as several of the lamp shades, while the furnishings were yellow, orange, brown and ochre. Essentially, we got rid of blue and green, unless we used it as a light or a counterpoint to something else."

Whereas many cinematographers would turn to filters to achieve a warm feel, Escoffier prefers gels. "We did it *all* in the lighting," reports gaffer Scott Ramsey. "Jean Yves uses theatrical gels extensively, as opposed to the normal, color-temperatured correction. If you have a white light and you make it a bit warmer or cooler, that is a color-temperature correction. If you use a theatrical gel, which *is* a color, then that is coloring the light."

Escoffier likes to use conflicting colors of lights, explaining, "There is a tension between opposite colors. And when actors go from one area to another, it's as if they're crossing into a different world."

Green proved to be a favorite color on *Rounders* because it contrasted so well with the warm yellows and reds. Several scenes take place in bars. One such scene is set in a traditional, old-world, well-appointed bar. The light is very warm, but a kitchen can be glimpsed in the background. Escoffier put a Lee 242 fluorescent 4300°K gel on the fluorescent lights in the room. The characters never enter the kitchen, which remains in the background throughout the scene.

Another sequence set in a strip joint ends with a thug pushing Worm around in the bathroom. Production designer Pearson made a huge collage out of porn pictures and covered an entire bathroom wall with it. The collage had a wide variety of colors, and Pearson put a glaze over it. Escoffier shot the scene with opposing shades of red, yellow and green light hitting the wall.

For night exteriors, he used a Lee 104 deep amber gel to suggest the warm sodium-vapor lights now being used in the Big Apple (the city formerly used mercury-vapor streetlamps, which weren't as warm). "The night stuff was beautiful," marvels New York-based gaffer Ramsey. "Some of the streets where we shot were very mundane, junky little lower East Side streets. But the way Jean Yves shot them, with the contrasts and pools of light, really brought them to life."

Night street scenes are Escoffier's favorite milieu. "I love to do the city by night," he says in a reverential tone. "It is like a painting." With a laugh, he adds, "I am a happy person by night."

The cinematographer sought to make the film's exterior night scenes more dramatic and expressionistic. "People who are addicted to playing cards are like night birds," he suggests. "They have strange minds. They are alone in the world. I didn't want them to appear in the normal light of the city by night, so I completely changed the light."

Escoffier created his dramatic nighttime exteriors partially through the use of Dino lights, which were aimed through custom-made cookies to create strong pools of light, so that people walking down the streets would travel in and out of the illuminated areas. The characters' faces were almost always highlighted with eyelights, which were either attached to the camera or held by a crew member walking beside the actor.

Escoffier's enthusiasm for chiaroscuro lighting is evident throughout the film, as in a scene when Mike approaches his law-school professor, played by Martin

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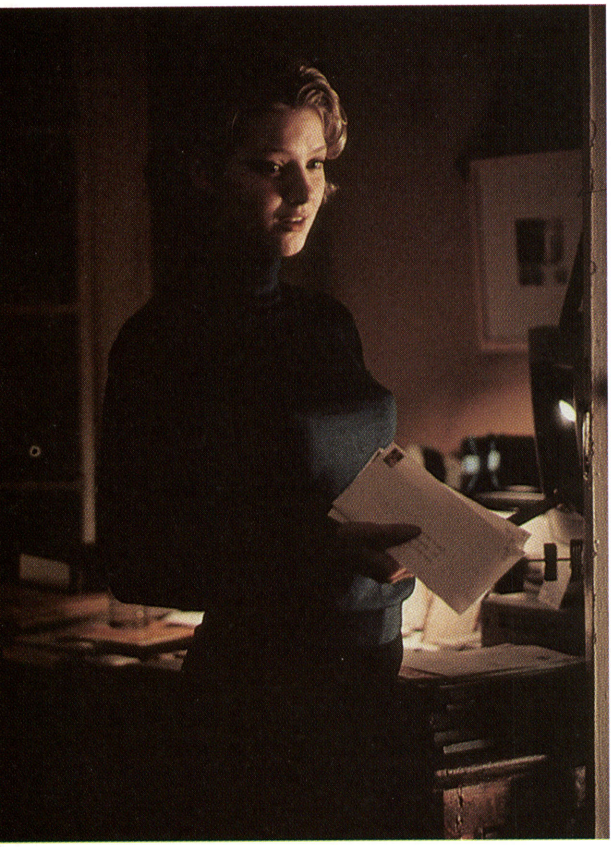

Above: Jo (Gretchen Mol) in the tenebrous apartment she shares with Mike. Escoffier worked closely with production designer Rob Pearson to render the space in darkness. Right: Dollies on circular track were often used to shoot the poker games.

Landau, to ask for a loan. Landau sits at his desk with half his face in shadow, the other half in light. The Chesterfield, one of the clubs Mike frequents, is also filled with shadows, except for the poker tables, which are bathed in a golden light emanating from period light fixtures hanging just above them. Escoffier asked the design team to paint the inside of the lamp covers yellow (they had been white) to make the bounce light warm.

The Chesterfield set was constructed inside a turn-of-the-century building in lower Manhattan that had been empty for several years. "When we walked in, it was a bunch of dilapidated windows on one side and bare concrete everywhere else," recalls Ramsey. "In a matter of days, Rob turned it into a beautiful set. We turned the windows into lights. One entire wall was windows, little leaded-glass panes about 2' by 18" by 4'. Instead of blacking them out, we turned them into light boxes that we could control. When the windows were in frame, we would put [the light] at a level that would allow us to photograph them. When we didn't see them, we would use them to help light the room."

Additionally, Pearson rimmed the room in yellow neon tubing to slightly separate the people from the dark walls. He also used orange felt on the poker tables instead of the traditional green. The tables in each club sported a different color of felt: orange, green or ochre.

In a subtle but very clever move, which perhaps only Russians in the audience will appreciate, Pearson hung an exquisite chandelier in the otherwise ratty, dirty card club run by Teddy KGB. "The best chandeliers in the world come from Russia," says Pearson with a laugh. "Our backstory on Teddy was that he was a fence and [had access to a lot of] stolen goods — so in this old dingy club, there were these beautiful chandeliers. It was a nice lighting device that created sparkles everywhere."

Dahl confesses that real card clubs are actually very brightly lit. "That was the one place where we made a big departure," he says. "Card players don't care what the room looks like, and most are lit with overhead fluorescents. But when you read a script about men playing cards, it seems as if it wants to be a darker, pools-of-light-over-the-tables sort of place, with all that traditional movie stuff. It becomes more like a pool hall. We simply decided to make a more dramatic statement and go with a darker, more atmospheric look. A real card player looking at this movie will probably say, 'Oh, that's a little bit Hollywood.'"

All of the poker clubs in the film are dark and moody — with the exception of the Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City, where the filmmakers decided to retain the lights already illuminating the room. Their only addition to the space was a modeling light (designed by Escoffier) to shape the light on characters' faces. Extras in the scene wear more colorful clothing, including a noticeable amount of blue.

Almost every poker game in the film was photographed from a circular dolly track, with the camera constantly orbiting the table. Even though the shots would be edited, the scenes were filmed in one long take to create a sense of continual movement. Escoffier asked grip Gary Martone to build a rig that was attached to the dolly and moved with

it. The rig consisted of several different lighting fixtures which could be manipulated to achieve different levels and positions of light. It also offered a motor and a pulley system which was controlled manually to keep the light in proper relationship to the actors and the camera.

Poker, of course, is a fairly static game in which people basically sit around a table, saying little or conversing as talking heads. With so little physical action to work with, it is incumbent upon the director to somehow create a sense of movement. "There wasn't anything spectacular we could do with the camera," admits Dahl. "The important thing was to get the audience to care about the characters. If viewers care about the characters, the game will be interesting."

For Escoffier, that meant focusing on faces and the almost imperceptible flickers of emotion which pass over them. "If you have three or four people sitting next to each other around a poker table, and they are always trying to trick one another, that is readable in their faces," he declares. "Poker is very much focused on people's eyes: where they look, where they don't look, what they avoid."

That is one reason the filmmakers decided to shoot in the 2.35:1 Super 35 format. "Super 35 has a very elegant way of focusing your attention on people's eyes," comments Escoffier. "If you shoot in Academy format [1.85:1], your attention is on the whole body of the person because you see the entire body." Another consideration was the desire to work with low light levels. Anamorphic wasn't an option. Therefore, the cinematographer elected to use Kodak Vision 500T 5279 for the entire film in order to ensure the same texture throughout.

Rounders' camera package consisted of two Panavision Platinums (one specially built to shoot

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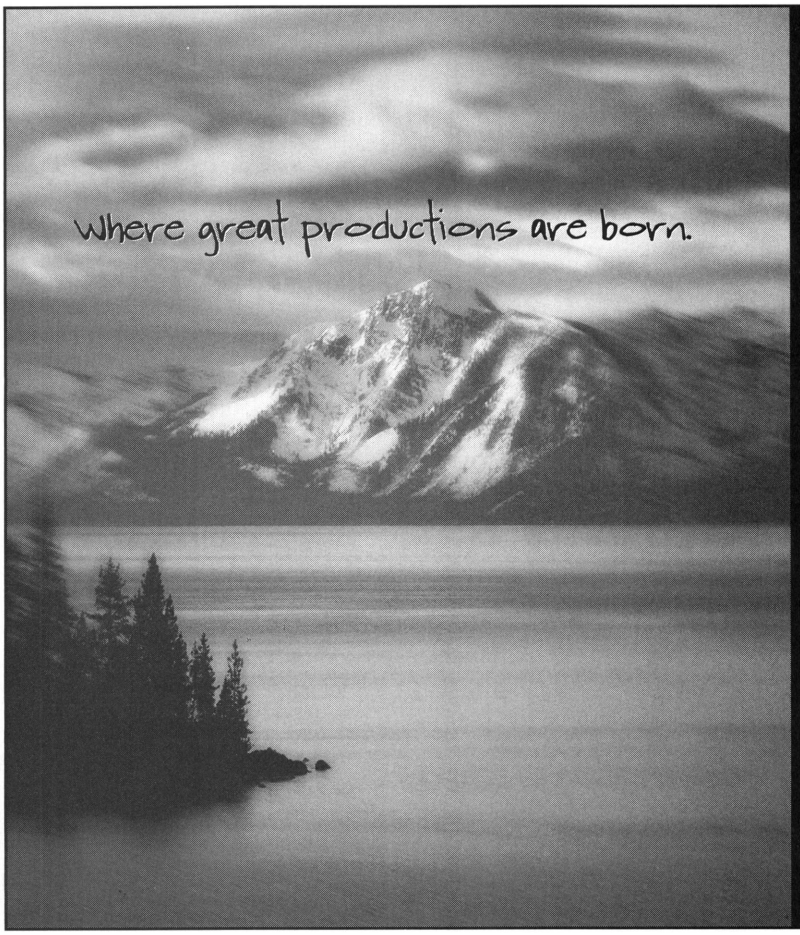
Card Sharks

On location in New York, soft fill is set for a dolly shot. Escoffier (in photo on opposite page, at left, with director John Dahl, at center), enjoyed shooting in the Big Apple, especially at night.



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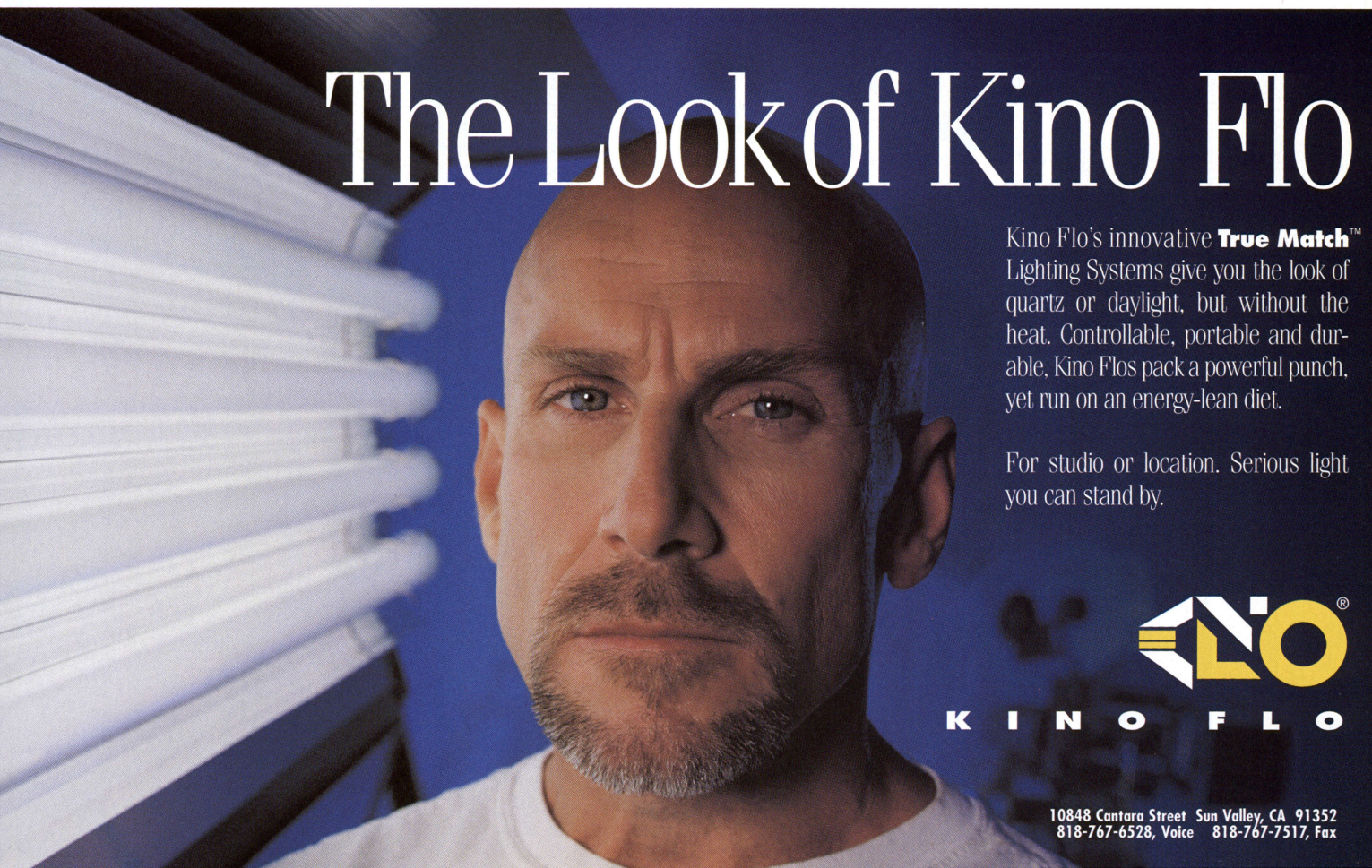
at 48 fps) and a high-speed "Panavised" Arriflex 435, which was used during card games to capture subtle facial expressions and hand gestures. Escoffier utilized Primo lenses, and notes, "No other brand has the quality of those lenses. There is usually a big loss of clarity when you go from primes to a zoom, but not with the Primos. They are amazing in terms of how clear and bright they are, and the color rendition is excellent. No one can compete with that."

In formulating an overall look for the picture, Dahl, Escoffier and Pearson watched *The Hustler*, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, *House of Games*, *Midnight Cowboy* and *Little Odessa*. "Most people think of poker as a game of chance or luck, whereas [professional players] think of it as a game of skill," notes Dahl. "They approach it almost the same way chess players do in their games. We watched *Searching for Bobby Fischer* [shot by Conrad Hall, ASC — see *AC* Feb. '94] as an example of how to portray the intensity of [a table-restricted] game and still keep it interesting for an audience."

Dahl and Escoffier agree that the film's intensity is generated primarily by the actors. For that reason, Escoffier considered rehearsals to be the most important part of the project's shooting days. "You see what happens during rehearsals," he says, "and that tells you how to design the sequence." With a laugh, he adds, "You can have a theory sometimes, but it's good to be modest about that." ■



Legal Eagle

Emmy-winning director/cinematographer Constantine Makris, ASC has helped NBC's *Law & Order* soar to high ratings and critical acclaim.

by Eric Rudolph

Photography by Constantine Makris and Eric Rudolph

On a recent production day for *Law & Order,* Constantine Makris, ASC was checking the shooting schedule when he noticed that the next few days of filming were slated for the soundstages. "Can't we rearrange the schedule so we're on location at least one of those days?" the show's primary director of photography (and one of its first-string directors) fairly pleaded with producers. "I start climbing the walls when I'm here for a few days in a row. I need to get out!"

And get out he does. The popular Universal Television series, currently in its ninth season of first-run episodes and enjoying solid ratings on NBC, consistently spends half of each eight-day production schedule on location in New York City. The show is on the streets and in real locations so often on Manhattan's Upper West Side (a favored setting) that the prospect of this major network drama dropping by to film has become as welcome as a garbage strike in July for many residents, who are weary of the disruptions and blocked streets.

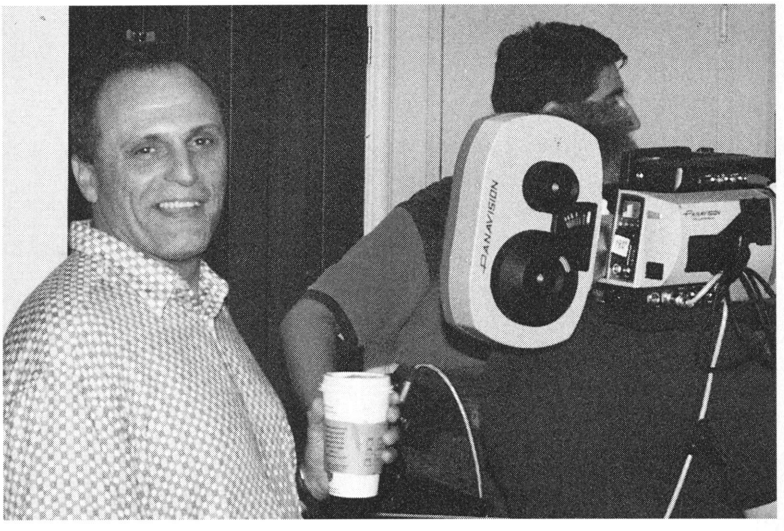
For Makris, however, hitting the street is still a thrill. "The fun of doing this show is working on location in New York City," he says. "I think my work may be better on location than in the studio. I like to deal with real problems. Since I've figured that out, I've started imagining, when I'm in the studio, that I'm on location and that I can't pull this wall out or clamp a light to this fancy molding. Having those types of limitations seems to spur my creativity. When every accent is right and every actor is perfectly backlit, I'm not that happy. I often do my best work when there are accidents. For example, when my gaffer is moving a light to the position I gave him and I see how it hits an actor as he's moving it, I'll often say 'Stop!' Or sometimes a lamp will go out and I'll think, 'Gee, that looks better; let's leave it out.'"

Makris, known to all as Gus, began directing episodes of *Law & Order* during the show's third season, and has now helmed a total of 19 episodes. He recently earned his third Emmy for his work on the series, and believes that directing has made him

Each episode of *Law & Order* is divided into two distinct halfs. The first (opposite) is the investigative portion involving detectives Lennie Briscoe and Raynaldo Curtis (Jerry Orbach and Benjamin Bratt), while the second (seen below) follows assistant district attornies Jack McCoy and Jamie Ross (Sam Waterston and Carey Lowell) as they try the accused in a more refined courtroom venue. (Actual film clips.)

Photos courtesy of NBC Media Relations.

Legal Eagle



Director of photography and occasional series director Constantine Makris on location.

a better cinematographer. "I've become much more flexible about lighting," he says. "Before I directed, I would gripe and say, 'I could make this look so much better if I didn't have to pan this last 45 degrees so this actor can say his line.' Now that I've become involved in staging scenes instead of just blocking them, I've learned ways to do what the director wants *and* make the show look the way I want when I'm shooting."

What are Makris's secrets? "I use dimmers and cross-fading more often. We also walk lights, with electricians doing things like dipping under the frame-line to move a handheld light to the actor's new position. I read an interview with Allen Daviau [ASC] in *American Cinematographer* where he said, 'I don't know how to do things without walking lights or moving nets and flags as the characters move.' That comment really stuck with me and has greatly influenced how I light now, along with the revelations that came from directing. The dance between the actors and the camera is one of the most interesting facets of this show — in addition to the fact that the writing, acting and directing are so good."

Makris usually directs five shows per season, which means that in order to have the director's customary eight-day preparation period before the eight-day shoot, he is unable to be cinematographer on 10 episodes per year. "I was offered the chance to direct more than five shows per season, but I declined," he reveals. "I want to be known as the guy who lights *Law & Order*."

"I cringe a little when people say I have a style. I truly hope that my style is different for each project and that it comes from what is written on the page."

— Constantine Makris, ASC

While Ed Sherin, executive producer of *Law & Order* (and a frequent director of the show) would like Makris to direct more often, he also has high praise for the latter's cinematography. "Gus is a truly remarkable man of film," says Sherin. "He's established the visual style of the show, and it compares favorably with high-budget features. He has an artist's eye. He molds faces like a portraitist and creates these very effective moods with light, from early mornings to sullen late nights at the office. His lighting always supports the intentions of the script. He knows exactly when the available light is usable, and if he can use that, or only two lights, he will. And when he decides how to light a scene, he goes at it. Some cinematographers can't do that; they constantly stop to rethink things. This ability and Gus's other talents help us make our schedule and have a great-looking show."

Makris's basic lighting approach for day interiors (which predominate, especially in the second half of the show, which focuses on the workings of the district attorney's office) is to bring the key light in through a window and then fill around the actors. "If the window is approachable on a location, that's usually where we start," Makris notes. "However, if the location is more than a few stories up and there is only one scene, we'll try to avoid putting the window in the frame, or else gel it with ND. But if I've got three scenes to do, we'll put up a Condor and light through the window. We routinely block and light windows that are 40 to 70 feet up! On our studio sets, shining the key through the window is very common. It's not a rule, but I think the window light suits the somber tone of our stories."

Creating strong shafts of light that penetrate the show's dark offices through the windows is another favorite approach. "If there is something interesting on somebody's desk, in their wardrobe or on their face, I'll often hit it with a shaft of light. I have mixed feelings about doing that, because I feel as if I'm 'lighting' when I do it. So I'll stop doing it for a while, and then I'll see a strong shaft of light in real life and say 'Well, maybe it's okay,'" Makris explains. "These tight, strong shafts of light happen in New York City, where you will get the ambient window light and then a small,

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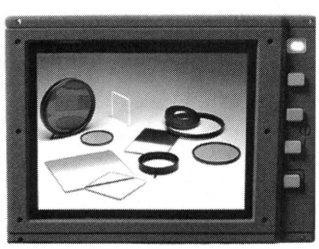

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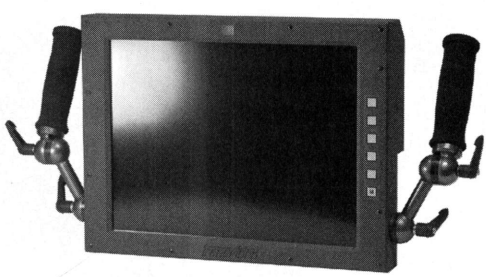

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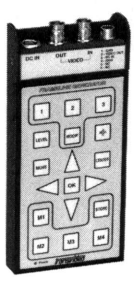

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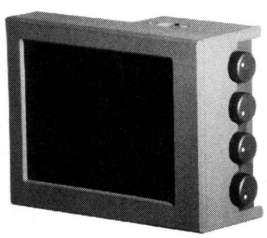

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oddly shaped shaft from a reflection off another building.

"We use Fresnels, HMI Pars and mirrors to make our shafts. We'll cut a Fresnel or Par with diffusion or a flag, and we have different sizes of mirrors which we use to make really tight beams of light. Sometimes, in the interrogation room, we'll hit a subject with a shaft from a mirror if they have an interesting face or a tattoo. We just try to make sure it doesn't look like a spotlight!"

On location, Makris will often gel lights coming through the windows to approximate the colors of mercury- or sodium-vapor streetlights. "I also like to mix color temperatures — with the window light usually being blue and the interior practicals warm, of course. You'll see long takes where the cops will start out in the hallway of an apartment building lit with uncorrected green fluorescents. Then they'll go in an apartment and get hit with cool blue window light, and head down a hall to another room that is lit with very warm, household tungsten-type light. That sort of mixing of color temperatures has a very true-to-life feel to me."

The cinematographer often uses uncorrected fluorescent practical sources on location. "If we're in a tenement hallway that is lit with fluorescents, we often won't replace or gel them," he says, "because it is an effective look to have greenish light in that sort of location. Besides, you encounter many different types of fluorescents on location, and you can't just replace them all with tubes from the truck. When you try to gel an odd-shaped bulb, you can do a beautiful job but still end up getting no usable light from it!"

For night interiors, Makris says that his basic approach is to make the light look as if it is coming from a practical — "either one that is in the picture or an imaginary one outside the frame."

The show's subject matter is unrelentingly grim and downbeat, which naturally influences the lighting. "*Law & Order* is about serious stuff," notes Makris. "There is always a dead body in the first 40 seconds. The show is based on hard, cold reality. From that basic story approach, I've developed an emphasis on cross-lighting. I try never to flat-light, which is inherently undramatic. Light in the real world isn't planned and executed by specialists. It is often somewhat chaotic."

Makris explains that he takes more of a feature-like approach to separating his actors from the scenery, remarking, "I don't like to rim-light. We do it when we need to — for example, if we have [series star] Sam Waterston in a gray suit against a brown wall — but I prefer to separate the actors using the background. I try to light and

Makris checks his exposure on actors Jerry Orbach and Benjamin Bratt while preparing for a handheld shot.

shadow the background in an interesting way that will contrast with the actors. To me, that approach is more like a feature and less like 80 percent of television, where everyone seems to have a halo." When he does employ rim-light, Makris prefers to use fluorescents or a soft light. "They wrap better and tend to look ambient," he notes.

For night exteriors, Makris usually assembles a single big source, made from three Maxi-Brutes on a Condor. "We can't take the feature approach of using a lot of smaller sources, as I would prefer," he says. "One of the three Maxis may have spotty bulbs and other mediums. We flare them out and use it as a giant back- and edge-light. I don't like to use HMIs at night in the city; that blue light just doesn't look right there. Although I generally prefer not to back-light, I find that in the city at night you need backlighting to separate your actors from their dark surroundings."

While mounting the big source for night work is a major undertaking, lighting the actors' faces is usually fairly simple. "If we can just use a board to bounce the light back to their faces, we will, but often we end up using a Griffolyn — anything from a 4' by 4' to a 12' by 12' — and hit it with a nine-light, from which we'll add or subtract light as the actors move closer and farther away," Makris details. "It's another example of how you can dramatically change the lighting during a scene. We'll bring down a single in front of some of the nine-light's bulbs as the actors get closer to the Griffolyn. We've found that you can change the lighting during a scene a great deal. As long as you have a moving camera and moving actors, the changes are invisible."

The cinematographer says that he employs a wide range of lighting instruments, including "everything from an 18K to a Kino

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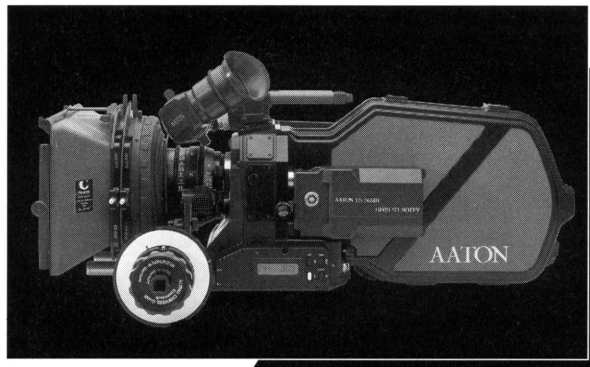

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Flo the size of a pencil. In fact, I once lit a scene with just those two lights; we had the 18K through the window and used the pencil-sized Kino as a minuscule eyelight.

"I favor direct light through diffusion rather than bounce light," he adds. "I rarely hard-light anymore. The shadows from hard light disturb me, because you don't see them in real life. Using deep dark shadows can amplify the drama, but I try to do that sparingly."

To a great extent, the show's signature low-contrast look is dictated by the production and costume design. "We rarely have anyone wearing anything bright or garish," Makris says. "When you see a woman in a purple dress on *Law & Order,* it really jumps out. The show is actually somewhat monochromatic in its overall design, which is fun and challenging. We have a very limited palette; it is often a study in browns, grays and blues. Some people tell me they turn down the color and watch the show in black-and-white!"

The series is also known for having an overall bluish-gray cast, which Makris says comes from the production design, costumes, post-production and, sometimes, from his penchant for gelling lamps, depending on the mood of the episode.

Makris does not operate the camera, except for the occasional special shot that he feels he can do best. "It would be too much for one person to light this show and then haul around a Panaflex on his shoulder for half the day."

Surprisingly, the show does not feature as much handheld work as people assume. Makris recalls, "When I took over from Ernest Dickerson [ASC, whose credits include *Do the Right Thing* and *Malcolm X*], they were going to amazing lengths to do handheld work. Remember, this is 35mm, not 16mm, so everything is heavier. There was a big counterbalanced cantilever with bungee cords so they could handhold shots with a 150mm lens. They would try to film these 2½-minute courtroom speeches that way, which was a little difficult using a 400-foot magazine! They were constantly changing magazines because each 400' load — which runs about four and a half minutes — only allowed for one take per roll. And changing mags that often slows everything down exponentially."

To counter this, Makris devised a clever and subtle solution that helped speed up production appreciably while maintaining the handheld feel throughout the show. "I said, 'Let's use 1,000-foot loads,' which are, of course, too heavy to

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handhold for any length of time. But the producers didn't want a static frame. So what looks like good handheld work is often my operators constantly panning and tilting the Panahead very, very minutely. People ask if we use a Steadicam, but we don't. We'll lay dolly tracks and use a butt-dolly for low handheld shots."

This is not to say that the cameras on *Law & Order* are static. Makris enthuses, "Ed Sherin, who devises challenging shots when he directs, spurs us on. For one show, we did a single, long take that started in a cubicle in a YMCA. In this particular sequence, some detectives are looking for a key in a man's room. They find it, go down a hallway and open doors on a karate class and other athletic activities. Finally, they open a door to a big gym, where the guy they're looking for is playing basketball by himself. When they call his name, he throws the ball at them and runs. As we were shooting the chase, my camera operator, Christopher Misiano, was running as fast as he could with the Panaflex. As soon as the cops got the suspect to the ground, my operator, who was wearing knee pads, slid in close on his knees. The shot gets very rough during the slide, but it has great energy!"

"[A commercial client] said to me, 'I love the way your show looks, because you don't light it.' Well, that 'non-light' look probably involved four 10Ks!"

— Constantine Makris, ASC

Makris also plans shots that are filmed to be "edgy, rather than with beautiful, perfect TV framing." He also takes a decidedly different approach to framing for the standard TV frame and for HDTV. "I encourage my operators to frame for the 1.78:1 HDTV aspect ratio rather than 1.33:1," he reveals. "For TV these days, you normally frame for the 1.33:1 and 'protect' the area in the wider frame, but I tell the operators to frame things for the wide format. To me, that subtly gives the impression that the show was made for a bigger screen, and I think it adds visual interest. The viewers may not consciously know what's going on, but I hope they feel as if they're watching a theatrical movie on TV. We film in 35mm partially to have a feature look, so why not try to add some extra visual impact? As for the missing informa-

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tion, you don't miss what you don't see."

Like many cinematographers, Makris does not want to be pigeonholed for creating a specific type of look. "I cringe a little when people say I have a style. I truly hope that my style is different for each project and that it comes from what is written on the page," he explains.

Makris says that the show's reputation for being "gritty" is accurate, but also appropriate to the material. "In the first season there was an attempt to add grain in post, but that was quickly abandoned," he reveals. "Of course, if you're filming cops raiding a crack den, it *should* look gritty. You want a scene to look real for its moment. The show may have gotten that gritty reputation because in the first two seasons, the scripts focused more on street crime. We eventually developed more of what I call 'Claus von Bulow' stories, which concern rich people's crimes. Still, we'll often film in the seediest of flophouses and then at one of the fanciest hotels in the world, all within a few shows."

Makris uses Kodak's 200 ASA EXR 5293 for day interiors and some day exteriors. Night interiors and exteriors (and occasional dark day interiors) are shot on 500 ASA EXR 5298. "We move fast and still use the 400-foot mags for shots that are actually handheld, so I try to use only two stocks at any time," he explains.

Law & Order is shot almost entirely with Panavision Primo prime lenses. "We use the short 4:1 Primo zoom [17.5-75mm T2.3], as well as a complete set of Primo primes ranging from 21mm to 150mm. I've also got a Nikon 200mm and 300mm. Our day-to-day workhorse, however, is the 40mm. I just don't see the need for a lot of heavy, costly zooms. And after using the primes for so long, I think exclusively in terms of primes: 'This shot is a 21mm or a 27mm,' which are two lenses we use often, especially lately. I joked recently that I was going to use a telephoto for close-ups — a 35mm! That said, we will often handhold with a 75mm, but we normally use something from 27mm to 50mm."

Makris eschews lens filtration, noting, "I rarely use anything but color correction; I like to shoot with as little in front of my lens as possible."

While the show is closely identified with its New York setting and production base, it is produced by Universal Television, which is based in Los Angeles. This means that postproduction is done 3,000 miles away. The long-distance marriage has created some problems that Makris has recently taken steps to solve. "They literally take

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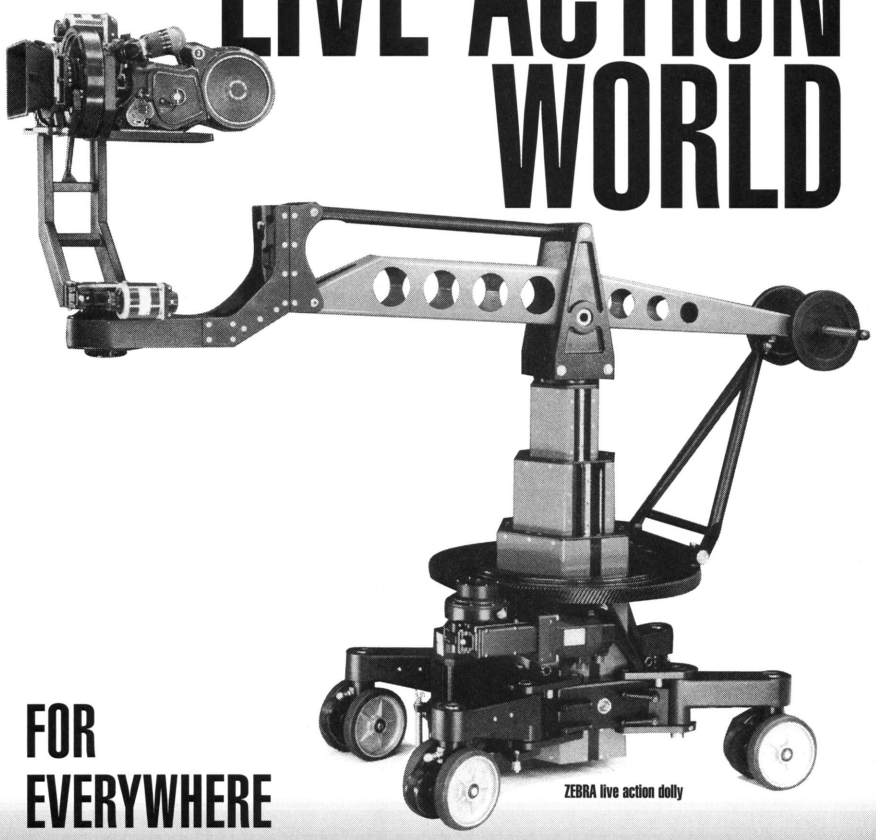

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our unprocessed 35mm negative and put it on a plane to Deluxe in Los Angeles!" he exclaims. "The postproduction staff began getting a bit creative, changing things I'd done. The squad room walls are green — not blue, as they have appeared to be in some shows. If I say an actor should have an orange half-shadow on his face, well, he should, because I'm the person being paid to light this show. Sometimes I want to warm up a scene with a one-quarter CTO. But when I see the show, the scene is not warm — it's white. For that reason, I started using a ½ CTO where I previously might have used a ¼.

"Steve Garfinkle, our Kodak rep, suggested using their Grey Card Plus system," he continues. "Up to that point, I had only been giving post a gray scale. With Kodak's system, with its calibration of the telecine, the colorists' job is to simply match his copy of the Grey Card Plus card to the card we film. If they do that, the show should look the way it was intended to when it reaches the home screen."

Makris is clearly passionate about his work, which he says is sometimes misunderstood. While the realistic lighting for *Law & Order* bolsters the show's credibility as much as the use of actual New York City locations does, the lighting is so authentic that some people outside of the industry think Makris's modus operandi involves simply showing up and filming with available light. In fact, the cinematographer was once asked to shoot some commercials for a politician because one of the media advisors was a fan of his *Law & Order* work. "This advisor said to me, 'I love the way your show looks, because you don't light it.' Well, that 'non-light' look probably involved four 10Ks!" Makris quips. "I'd say that was one of the greatest compliments I've ever received." ■

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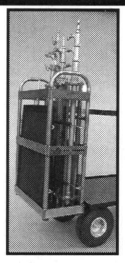

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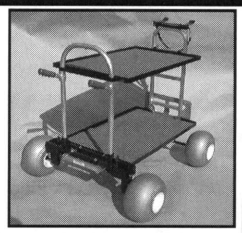

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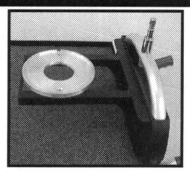

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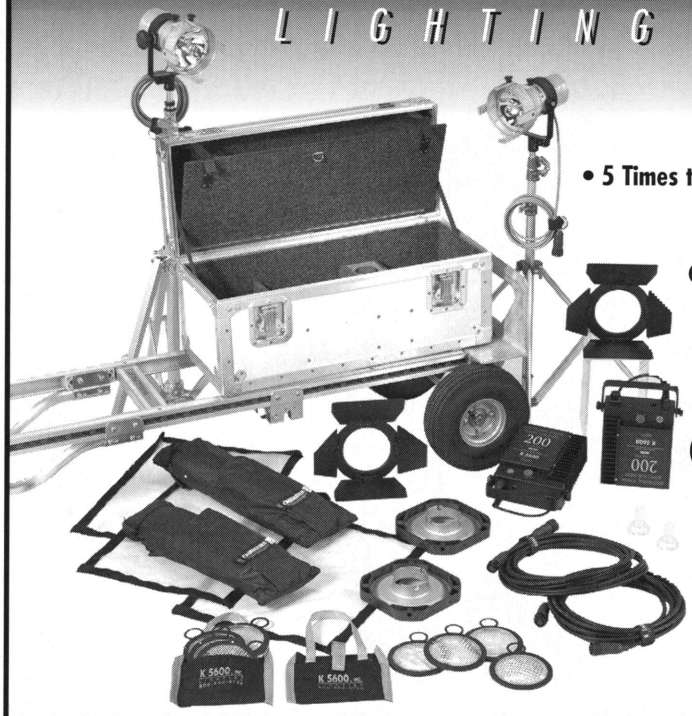

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Swanky Modes

The CBS television pilot *Buddy Faro*, directed by Charles Haid and photographed by Aaron Schneider, achieves a retro look with the help of some modern methods.

by Bob Fisher

Photography by Spike Nannarello

The first time director Charlie Haid called cameraman Aaron Schneider to talk about collaborating on a TV pilot, lightning struck. The series was *Murder One*, and it proved to be a triumph for all concerned. When he was offered the job, Schneider, a University of Southern California film school grad, was making a name for himself shooting music videos and commercials. He shot the first 10 episodes of the series, which spanned parts of two seasons. *Murder One* was the cinematographer's first narrative filmmaking experience, but his work earned him ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards in both

1995 and 1996, among other honors, shifting his career into high gear.

In early 1998, Haid and Schneider spoke by phone again about the pilot for *Buddy Faro*, which was being developed by Spelling Entertainment for CBS. The story centers on the titular character (played by Dennis Farina), a flamboyant private eye who dropped out of sight in 1978. A mysterious woman, played by Alison Smith (formerly of *Kate and Allie*), hires a small-time P.I. named Bob Jones (Frank Whaley) to help her find Faro. She tells Jones that someone has left the missing detective an inheritance.

The lackluster Jones, who idolizes Faro, is thrilled to accept the assignment. However, it turns out that Smith's character is merely an out-of-work actress hired to find Faro. She thinks her benefactor is an old pal of Faro's who wants to surprise him; in reality, he's a mobster whom Faro sent to jail. The bad guy is back on the streets, and he's obsessively determined to find and kill Faro.

Haid, a veteran actor in both features and television (*Altered States, Hill Street Blues*) has turned to directing and executive-producing with great success; his directing credits include such telefilms as *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *Buffalo Soldiers*, as well as episodes of *High Incident, ER* and *NYPD Blue*. He teamed up with writer/executive producer Mark Frost (*Twin Peaks*) to bring *Buddy Faro* to the air for Spelling Television. Frost wrote the pilot for Haid to direct, and the duo also serve as executive producers on the project. Haid says he wanted a cinematographer with the courage and imagination to think outside of the box, and the ability to be creative within a TV schedule and budget.

The following are excerpts of a conversation with Schneider and Laser Pacific Media color timer Tom Overton.

***American Cinematographer:* What was your first contact from Charlie Haid about *Buddy Faro*?**

Aaron Schneider: I was calling a friend, and I dialed Charlie's number by mistake. He said that it was really weird that I'd called, because he had just been speaking with Mark Frost about an unusual pilot. He sent me the script, which led to a meeting with Charlie and Mark.

Do you know why Charlie wanted you to shoot the project?

Schneider: He has a great relationship with Bill Wages [ASC, who earned consecutive ASC Awards for his work on *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *Buffalo Soldiers*], and they do terrific work together. But I think Charlie calls me when he wants to do something wacky.

Was that your first impression of *Buddy Faro*? Something wacky?

Schneider: I read the script and met with Mark and Charlie before Dennis Farina was cast in the lead role. I saw it as a very stylized film, a funny drama. Buddy Faro is a relic of a bygone era. He ran with the Rat Pack, but one of his cases went awry and he started drinking. Then one day, he disappeared. It turns out that Buddy has spent 20 years living in obscurity in a small Mexican seacoast village drinking himself silly. Jones and the mystery woman inadvertently lead the bad guys to Buddy in Mexico, but he manages to avoid being killed. They go back to L.A., where Faro and Jones team up, which is almost farcical, because they are so different.

Is this an original story or is it based on a book?

Schneider: It's a pure product of Mark Frost's imagination. He's one of the brighter writers around. He's got a real sense of humor and a bent mind.

How did you design the look or visual style?

Schneider: The story is staged in contemporary times, but Charlie and I wanted it to feel retro. Buddy Faro is like a fish out of water. He's back in contemporary L.A., but he looks and sounds like Frank Sinatra's character in *Ocean's Eleven*. "Swank" was the word the Rat Pack would have used to describe guys like him. His vocabulary, clothing and lifestyle are stuck in the 1960s and '70s. We created a stylized look contrasting

Opposite: Buddy (Dennis Farina) paints the town with a bevy of beautiful babes. This page: His resurrection complete, Buddy surveys his turf with a pair of new partners (Frank Whaley and Alison Smith).

Photos courtesy of Spelling Entertainment.

Swanky Modes

the remnants of old Hollywood with the current, more run-down version.

Could you describe the kind of "retro look" you were after?

Schneider: I didn't want *Buddy Faro* to look like a modern television show. I wanted a more tactile feeling that had its own texture and patina, like an old-movie look, so I decided to shoot with [color] reversal film. I've used it on music videos, so I knew it was really dangerous and edgy sort of stuff, but it's very colorful if you handle it right. Reversal is also a very slow-speed film and I liked the idea that it would force me into methods and techniques more reminiscent of cinematography before technical advance. As a result, *Buddy Faro* is a more colorful, contrasty and nostalgic vision of modern-day Hollywood. Because the final product of reversal film is a positive print, the film transfer was more reminiscent of our favorite films of yesteryear as seen on video today.

Tom Overton: *Buddy Faro* also has a 1960s "optical printer" look. Wipes that are considered passé today were used extensively in transitions.

What type of reversal film did you use?

Schneider: We used two Kodak Ektachrome films in 35mm format. One is a 125-speed film [5240] balanced for tungsten, and the other is a 160-speed film [5239] balanced for daylight. My friends at Kodak were very helpful in quickly generating these two stocks for our production. An entire section of their manufacturing plant had to be converted to reversal production. I think everyone in the company and at the network looked at a print of *Clockers* [shot by Malik Sayeed, see *AC* Sept. '95] to see what Ektachrome film looks like onscreen, but I was doing something different. They used a cross-processing technique on *Clockers*, which gives you a negative that intercuts with the rest of the footage. The side effect of the latter is very strange and peculiar color rendition. I processed normal because I wanted to use reversal for its sort of "newsreel" quality with rich blacks and all the trimmings of a positive print.

And you'd previously applied this technique to music videos?

Schneider: Yes, a couple of times three or four years ago. I remembered how beautiful and grainless it looked. The grain structure looks equivalent to [Eastman EXR] 5248 or 5245. It has a fluttery quality. The film's density varies in areas of middle gray and mid-tones. The film kind of breathes as if it's alive. I also did some research and found out which lenses cinematographers used 20 years ago on shows like *Mannix, Cannon* and *MacMillan and Wife*. I told my assistant cameraman that I wanted a decent set of [Panavision] Ultraspeeds that were functional, but not too functional, if you know what I mean. After landing on an exaggerated, wide-angle approach to the world of these characters, we ended up never using a lens longer than 50mm. Plus, I wanted the option of working at T1.3 in case of a "slow-speed emergency." As a result, our camera and lens rental came in under budget. Despite their older technology, these lenses performed great. They're beautiful.

Did you encounter any resistance to the idea of using the Ektachrome?

Schneider: There were a couple of bad days with a lot of phone calls, but Charlie stood up for the idea, and Ken Miller, the vice president of postproduction at Spelling, was also supportive. While we were shooting, I got a great call from Duke Vincent, a top guy at Spelling, who thought the show looked like a movie. That meant a lot to us. The biggest concern was processing, but Yale Laboratories really came through for us with an extra effort.

Yale is the only lab that is presently processing 35mm reversal film on the West Coast, and it runs about four times slower through the soup. They could only turn out approximately 8,000 feet a day, and would need 24 hours to begin the turnaround. We ultimately convinced those concerned that a one-day delay wasn't going to be the end of the world. We actually came in under budget for exposed film too. At one point on the set Charlie blurted out, 'When I work with you, Aaron, I'm in my minimalist period.' I took it as a compliment. You know, quality over quantity.

Did you do any tests before committing to the idea of shooting with reversal?

Schneider: I shot my standard exposure test using a gray-scale card with a human face and colorful fruit in the frame. I find using real objects of color we can readily identify with is more telling than a color chart. I over- and underexposed five stops in

A sequence of frame-grabs from the show illustrates Aaron Schneider's artistry: (1) Uncorrected warm-white fluorescents are combined with a wide lens to create a compelling subjective angle; (2) An uncorrected daylight-balanced fluorescent adds caricature to a scene involving Buddy's lawyer and his nurse, while a Power Window placed over the actress's head preserves and highlights her platinum-blonde hair; (3) Noir touches (naked lightbulbs and an old-fashioned fan) underscore Bob's bumbling nature; (4) A low angle and a mixture of uncorrected fluorescents and tungsten fixtures add pizzazz to this shot of Buddy "drunk in the gutter" at a bowling alley; (5) The domineering personality of Bob's girlfriend is highlighted by Schneider's allusion to the lighting style of German Expressionism.

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½-stop increments. It's a test that shows not only the shape of the curve but the over- and underexposure latitude, as well as the [equivalent] ASA that makes the film look the way I want it. By "correcting" each over- and underexposure, I can see what the film looks like at different ASA interpretations. Leon Silverman at Laser Pacific, set up a room for studying the developed film on the telecine. From what I learned, I decided to underexpose both films by a half-stop, because it makes the images a little more saturated with deeper blacks — the exact opposite of how negative film behaves.

Two terrific cinematographers, [ASC members] Paul Ryan and Bob Primes, worked with me on the tests. We spent 12 hours shooting at Panavision — Phil Radin was kind enough to set us up with a camera and their shooting stage — and a large part of a day analyzing the results at Laser Pacific. I wanted to find the shape of the [sensitometric] curve. You only have about ¾ of a stop less under- and overexposure with reversal film, but the shape of the curve is radically different. Negative has a more gradual curve. You lose information a lot faster with reversal film.

How did you handle composition for future widescreen TV broadcasts?

Schneider: I composed with a common top line and sides, and framed the images for 1.33:1. That's the way the program will be seen by the vast majority of people. You can't do a good job of composing for two formats at the same time. If they decide in the future to release this film in HDTV format, I'll be happy to supervise extracting a 16 by 9 image by cutting off part of the bottom of the frame.

What else did you do to get a retro look?

Schneider: On *Murder One*, we used strong compositions, long lenses and tight headroom for a more dramatic frame. With *Buddy Faro*, we turned to the older interpretation of composition and camera movement. We also used a bit of what you might call the 'cheesy' elements of some old television shows. At one point, we used a big fat zoom-in on a window for an establishing shot. It took us a few takes to purposefully execute the zoom improperly. The term I used with my camera operator, David Boyd, was 'interestingly cheesy.' We centered heads in the frame and gave them 'too much' headroom. We all had a lot of fun trying to create a subtle comedy in the camerawork itself.

How did you handle camera movement?

Schneider: Camera moves were deliberately self-conscious at

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times to remind the audience that the reality we're presenting is stylized. In the beginning, the moves were minimal, and we were mainly shooting off a dolly. When Jones and the mystery woman go to Mexico to search for Buddy, the camera gets a bit more playful, but the movement is still sporadic. When Buddy comes back to L.A. and reverts to his old personality, the camera comes alive. It is always moving. It's a 'swank' look, to use one of Buddy's words. We shot with a Steadicam and Technocrane. By the time Buddy's world is back up to speed, the camera was as slick as Buddy himself.

Did you actually shoot on location in Mexico?

Schneider: No, we shot those scenes in San Pedro [in the L.A. port district].

How many days did you have to shoot?

Schneider: We had 16 days, but we had a very ambitious schedule with many moves. There were days we moved twice, and all the way across town. It was all location work. There wasn't a single shot on a stage. I saw all of the locations, but didn't have a hand in selecting them. We shot in garages, motel interiors, nightclubs and bars.

Did you use any visual metaphors?

Schneider: Charlie is a very visual director. I'll give you an example. When we first meet Buddy in Mexico, his life is overcome with despair and he's been drinking himself silly. Later, in L.A., he wanders off through the streets of Hollywood, saddened by how it has changed. Dressed like a bum, he wanders into his old watering hole and orders up a martini for old times sake. He strikes up a conversation with the woman tending bar and soon learns that all the people he knew and cared about have died or moved on. He's at rock bottom so to speak, and nurses the martini like mother's milk. The Bob Jones character walks in and inspires him to move ahead with his life. He says, 'Let's get outta here,' all to the melody of 'Here's that Rainy Day' [an old Sinatra tune]. We designed a shot in which Buddy's half-full martini glass sits in-focus in the foreground as Buddy's 'soft' figure disappears through the bar door in the background. I loved that shot for how it visually suggested that Buddy has somehow left the drinking behind. No one has said a word about it, but the audience can see that drinking is not going to a problem for him anymore. Unfortunately, the shot didn't get used.

Is that difficult for you as a cinematographer?

Schneider: You get used to it. [He points at the monitor, which

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Swanky Modes

More frame-grabs: (1) A split diopter was used for this shot of Buddy seeking solace in a martini; (2) A practical chandelier provided by production designer Tom Walsh underscores Buddy's desolation at one of his old haunts; (3) Dimmer cues segue into a sepia effect during this nostalgic "in-camera" flashback, which was treated with "digital diffusion"; (4) Key grip Kevin Erb helped Schneider simulate the look of a dance-hall marquee by mounting hundreds of bulbs atop a 12' x 12' frame, which was later removed from the scene by crack timer Tom Overton; (5) Buddy's face is illuminated by the light bouncing off his bath's white bubbles.

displays a shot of Buddy's home.] Look how cheesy that is. The walls are beige. It's colorless. It's very 1960s with that shag carpet and those ugly chairs. It tells you he can't afford prime real estate.

It look like you were using a very wide-angle lens.

Schneider: I think it was 14mm. We shot almost everything with wide-angle lenses. One of my references was Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. Joe Sedelmaier mastered that look in his commercials — like the 'Where's the beef?' hamburger spots, with the characters at the top of the frame and the lens exaggerating them into caricatures.

Overton: Aaron and I did a lot of interesting things together during timing. In one scene, we stripped all of the cooler colors out and left the red tones. It has a sepia-like quality, with the reds standing out. It's kind of a period look done totally in post.

Why did you make the decision to get that look in telecine?

Schneider: Actually, I tried to alter the tone right on the film by making a lighting change, but it was a very complicated shot that had to be made quickly. I didn't get as dramatic a change in tone and color as I wanted. When I got into the telecine, I decided to play around with the idea of exaggerating some changes in tone. Tom and I came up with this idea together. Buddy is remembering a lady in a red coat during an earlier time in the same bar. Everything else is sepia. It made it much more poignant.

Overton: I'd like to say that every decision we made was premeditated, but frequently you try a bunch of things to find out what works. This was a trial-and-error process until we found the combination of elements that created the most dramatic images.

Schneider: In that particular bar scene, Buddy and Bob Jones are talking. There are about 60 seconds of dialogue and voice-over. The words describe a 20-year-old memory about what drove Buddy over the edge. I asked Charlie, 'What if instead of just talking about her, we come in over Buddy's shoulder and dissolve to a scene with him sitting in the same watering hole 20 years earlier, with the woman in the background? Then we could dissolve back to the bar with Buddy and Bob talking.' Doing that required a change in a few voice-over lines. Charlie spoke with Mark Frost, who gave us the lines. I then choreographed the shot.

As you get deeper into the show's story, it looks as if you're using lower camera angles. Is that an accurate impression? If so, why did you take that tack?

Schneider: I took my cues from the world Charlie was creating with the characters. At the beginning, the character of Bob Jones is very straightlaced and plain. The camera usually sees him from a high angle and wide point of view, which sort of belittles him. Later, we shoot him from lower, more heroic angles.

What are some things you learned while working with Tom on this program?

Schneider: I learned a lot from him about da Vinci's Power Windows. There's a scene where I wanted to cast the shot with a blue-green kind of ugly fluorescent vibe. But a platinum blonde was supposed to be part of the scene in a sort of Marilyn Monroe kind of way. We ended up putting a Power Window over her hair and saved the yellow-blonde in her hair as a striking contrast to the scenes over-all hue. It made her otherwise ordinary blonde hair stand out as a visual icon.

Overton: When you isolate a face or object in a window, you can change colors, contrast and other details. You can solve problems and fine-tune images.

It sounds as if Power Windows was a really useful tool.

Schneider: Yes, and there are many examples. There is a scene in a boat when the characters are leaving Mexico, and it's a transition from night to sunrise. Buddy is looking over the edge of the boat. I needed Dennis Farina to pick his chin up over the threshold, so the light would hit his face. He didn't quite make it, so we lit his face in post.

Overton: When we put his face in that window, we could gradually build the light on it. We have control in the window over color, density, and brightness.

You can do that without affecting the rest of the image?

Overton: The secret to hiding Power Windows is learning to think like Aaron does on the set. You have to look at the scene and see where is the light coming from or where should it be coming from. It has to be a collaborative process.

How long have you been doing this type of work?

Overton: I got into the business about 18 years ago, starting in the electronic labs. I was the first telecine operator here [at Laser Pacific].

What's changing in your

world?

Overton: There is a lot of interesting new technology, but there is also an important change in relationships with cinematographers like Aaron. More of them are becoming more knowledgeable. They see digital post as an extension of their work.

How much of the photography did you actually preplan?

Schneider: That's what's great about working with Charlie. He comes in with a very solid working plan and then allows himself and others room for interpretation. Once the guiding philosophies are decided upon, it frees the mind to be spontaneous. I was responding to the location, the amount of time I had and what Charlie himself was discovering at the time.

Your close-ups seem to be lit like portraits.

Schneider: I wanted the lighting to be reminiscent of old-fashioned movies, where they used rimlights and Rembrandt-style three-quarter crosslight.

As Jones becomes less of a nerd, did you light him differently?

Schneider: I was trying to be kinder to him. You take your cues from the performances. If you watch a rehearsal and he's being a nerd, you light him like a nerd. If he's in trouble emotionally, or he's becoming more hip, you light him for that.

There's a big scene in a club, which looked really complex to light.

Schneider: It's a big area, where we were shooting off a Technocrane, and there were also Steadicam moves. We used a dimmer board, so we could control where light was coming from as people and the camera moved. There was also a revolving disco ball made of mirrors. I had two 2K Xenons zapping into it. The room was brightly lit, so the light going into the revolving ball had to be even brighter to get the effect we wanted. With wide-angle lenses, you see more background than you normally would.

Did you use much diffusion on the show?

Schneider: Some of the feeling of softness comes from the older lenses we used, but I also used diffusion in the club scenes, and always on Alison Smith. The only two-shots she's in are at the club, so that wasn't a problem. I didn't care if the audience sensed that the cut-aways to her were more diffused than the rest of the scene. That was part of the look.

What was one of the toughest shots to figure out?

Schneider: Well one came along when we ran out of traffic as we were shooting Buddy pulling away from the dance club's marquee. Charlie wanted Buddy to pull into traffic, but by the time we got to the shot, the cars had disappeared. We decided to do the shot on our final

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"mini-unit" day and go to Sunset Blvd. to get the traffic and all the lights of Hollywood. Unfortunately, I no longer had the 300 lightbulbs of the dance club's marquee to tie the two together. I asked the grips to save the light-bars that we built into the marquee for our mini-unit shot. My key grip, Kevin Erb, mounted them onto a 12' by 12' frame to recreate the effect of the marquee. As it turned out, we were able to cheat the 12-by frame over the top of the car for a better effect. Like a car commercial, the black enamel came alive with hundreds of light bulb reflections that tied us into the location perfectly. To maximize the effect, we had to lower the 12-by frame just above the frame line. In dailies, we realized that the bulbs actually snuck down into the top of the shot. Tom was able to use Power Windows to put a black window over the bulbs and blend them seamlessly into the dark sky beyond.

It had to be a technically difficult shot, using a slow reversal film and 20-year-old lenses, in mainly available light at night.

Schneider: I shot a test, and got a great set of images at T1.4. We had two water trucks wet down the street, which helped.

How about the sequences set in Mexico?

Schneider: The only time I've been south of the border was when I shot three or four days of second unit for *Titanic*. I recalled that as soon as I crossed the border, the terrain was peppered with sparse streetlights that had an orange sodium-vapor glow. There was also a lot of ugly green fluorescent light. So I decided to give our Mexico scenes this distinctive color contrast — fluorescent green against sodium orange. Originally, I intended to shoot with the tungsten-balanced [5240] film and use warm white fluorescents in combination with tungsten lights with amber gels — a lot of gels for a huge night exterior. This plan would give me pure

green light in contrast with very orange light. I made a mistake and accidentally asked my gaffer, Tim McGinnis, to install cool-white fluorescents instead of warm-white. Unfortunately cool-whites render a more blue-green/cyan effect — not green enough. If I wanted pure green from the fluorescents, it meant replacing hundreds of tubes. Suddenly it dawned on me that if I used the daylight-balanced [5239] stock, I could effectively remove the blue-cast of the cool whites and get the pure green I wanted as a final effect. At the same time, I realized that by shooting [5239], the emulsion would render tungsten light as extremely warm — I'd no longer need the amber gel. I not only saved us from using a bunch of expensive gels, but by using the daylight emulsion — ASA 160 — I gained a third of a stop of emulsion speed for a huge night exterior. I'd love to say I planned it that way, but sometimes accidents go your way.

Aaron, do you have any final thoughts about the project?

Schneider: The opportunity to experiment and learn on projects like this don't come along every day. Charlie Haid is a cinematographer's best friend when it comes to the creative process. He respects my work and acknowledges my contribution to his own. It sounds like a bunch of buzz words, but I think we as cinematographers need to give credit to directors who support us in our work — whether it's patience on the set or backing up an idea with the power of their position. I know for a fact that I'm only as good as a director allows me to be. ■

Only Schneider's pilot for Buddy Faro *was photographed using Kodak's reversal stocks. Subsequent episodes of the show were shot by David Boyd, using Fuji emulsions.*

More of Schneider's work can be seen in the recently released threatrical feature Simon Birch.

Illuminating Images

1998's Emmy Award-nominated cinematographers radiate in the 1.33:1 domain.

by Christopher Probst

With an increasing number of network and cable television companies recognizing their audiences' desire for eye-catching camerawork, greater opportunities have arisen for adventurous directors of photography working in the TV medium — many of whom have also been aided by top-flight producers and directors who encourage them to take chances and push the envelope.

This year, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences bestowed Emmy Award nominations for Best Cinematography upon a wide variety of programs, perhaps foreshadowing even better and more innovative programming to come. In the following pages, we take a look at the nominees and winners in the Regular Series and Movie and Miniseries categories.

A wide array of productions earned Emmy nominations for Best Cinematography this year. Opposite: An image from *What the Deaf Man Heard* (shot by Eric Van Haren Noman). This page, from top: *George Wallace* (Alan Caso), *JAG* (Hugo Cortina), *Merlin* (Sergei Kozlov), *The Day Lincoln Was Shot* (Ron Garcia, ASC), and *Buffalo Soldiers* (William Wages, ASC).

Photos by (clockwise from top right): Doug Hyun,Oliver Upton, George Fry III, Doug Hyun and Danny Feld. Opposite page: Bob Greene.

Illuminating Images

Photo by David E. Williams.

Many of this year's Emmy nominees attended a special dinner held by Eastman Kodak at the Bistro Garden restaurant in Studio City, California. Each was honored with a Kodak Vision Award. Back row: William Wages, ASC; Jerry Cotts (co-nominated with five others for documentary camerawork), Mike McMurray, CSC; Donald A. Morgan (nominee for Outstanding Lighting Direction), Hugo Cortina, Joel Ransom, James Bagdonas, ASC and Gale Tattersall. Front row: George Spiro Dibie, ASC (nominee for Outstanding Lighting Direction); Alan Caso, James Jenson, Ron Garcia, ASC; and Jim Dutcher (nominated for documentary camerawork).

(✶ Denotes Winner of Category.)

REGULAR SERIES

James Bagdonas, ASC
Chicago Hope
"Brain Salad Surgery"

James Bagdonas garnered prior Emmy consideration for *Chicago Hope* with the 1997 episode "Hope Against Hope," and received a second nomination in that same year for the MOW *Hidden in America.* Additionally, the cinematographer has received three ASC Award nominations — two for his efforts on *Chicago Hope* (in 1997 for "Hope Against Hope," and 1996 for "Time to Kill") and a third for the series *Hunter* (for the 1989 episode "Investment in Death").

Bagdonas moved to Los Angeles in 1973 and began working in the industry as a camera assistant for such ASC members as Roy Wagner, Conrad Hall, Haskell Wexler and John Alonzo before moving up to operate for Chuck Minsky and Ray Villalabos. In 1989, Bagdonas assumed the title of director of photography on the series *Hunter,* for which he had previously been serving as operator. Two years later, Bagdonas moved on to *Lois and Clark: The Adventures of Superman,* where he resided for three seasons before joining *Chicago Hope.*

Now in his third season with the medical drama, Bagdonas credits the show's inventive writers for providing him with opportunities to play with the show's established look. "We had some interesting material to deal with last season," he says. "In the nominated episode, 'Brain Salad Surgery,' one of the doctors has a brain aneurysm and goes into hallucinations from the medication. Using that [visual opportunity], the show moves into several musical sequences. That was a total left turn from anything that we had done before, so for the lighting we were able to start from scratch and light the show as if it were a stage play. We basically rewired the entire stage, changed the practicals to colored lights and lit broader shots for the dance sequences.

"In the first scene," Bagdonas continues, "[Dr. Aaron Scott, played by Adam Arkin,] is pulled into the emergency room and his colleagues break into 'Ain't That a Kick in the Head,' their version of the old Sinatra number. The emergency room suddenly becomes a lounge as spotlights dim up and down. The transitions were carefully planned out and done live, without cuts. Parts of the stage were often preset so that as we panned or dollied through, we could bring the lighting up and then change it using dimmer boards. The room would transform from our regular ER into a Broadway stage, and then back again."

Hugo Cortina
JAG
"The Good of Service"

Before earning his first Emmy nomination, director of photography Hugo Cortina got his start in the electrical department, serving under such distinguished lighting technicians as Pat Blymyer before becoming a gaffer himself and aiding such ASC cinematographers as Matthew Leonetti, Donald M. Morgan, and Don Peterman. Setting his sights on working with the camera, Cortina then began operating the B-camera on *Lois and Clark* before landing the

A-camera spot on producer Don Bellisario's military/mystery series *JAG* (an acronym for Judge Advocate General), which was then being photographed under the attentive eye of cinematographer Thomas Del Ruth, ASC.

During the show's first season, Cortina was offered the chance to take over the photography when Del Ruth decided to direct an episode before departing the show. Cortina hasn't looked back since. Centered on different investigations concerning military matters, *JAG* employs a small arsenal of high-tech weaponry, heavy machinery and air/sea craft in its narrative backdrop. When such hardware is called into action on an appropriate location for any given episode, some cinematic sleight of hand is usually required to sell the believable usage of the gadgets, while still allowing a feasible production timetable for weekly episodes. To achieve this, the crew often utilizes poorman's process shots for scenes taking place in myriad ships, planes and helicopters to allow for recordable dialogue and repeated takes in otherwise cost-prohibitive situations. Additionally, *JAG*'s weekly narratives rarely occur in the same locales; this adds to the Cortina's photographic chore, but enables him to approach each episode as a "mini-movie."

Cortina notes that the nominated episode, "The Good of Service," offers "a culmination of many of the elements [that make *JAG* visually unique]. It has big nighttime explosions, very fast-paced camerawork and some extreme lighting situations. The episode starts in Haiti, where, during a military operation to free some POWs, an innocent local boy is killed during an eruption of gunfire. The episode then moves to Washington D.C. for the resulting investigation and court trial. We had to create a very harsh, contrasty look for the Haitian part of the show, and then a more polished look for the scenes set in Washington. Overall, *JAG* has a fairly documentary, contrasty look, and I try to make the lighting as real as possible. I use a lot of practical fixtures — even for day interior scenes — as well as many source-motivated lights from the windows."

Since last season, Cortina has been shooting *JAG* exclusively on Eastman Kodak's Vision stocks. He utilizes Vision 200T 5274 for the show's day exteriors, Vision 320T 5277 for day interiors and Vision 500T 5279 for nighttime work. The cinematographer frequently force-processes his footage one or two stops, depending on the material being shot. He recalls, "I recently pushed the Vision 200T two stops for a interior black-out sequence and was amazed with the results. I also underexposed almost another stop

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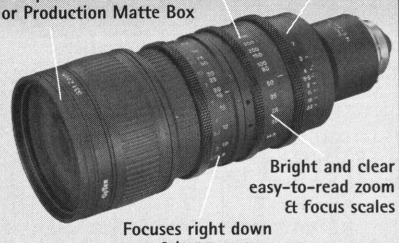

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✶ Constantine Makris, ASC
Law & Order
"Stalker"

Director of photography Constantine Makris has now earned three Emmys for his work on *Law & Order*. He previously won in 1993 for the episode "Conspiracy" (see *AC* Oct. '93) and again in 1997 for the episode "Mad Dog" (*AC* Oct. '97). Makris established himself in the industry as an operator on such films as *Reversal of Fortune*, *Kiss of Death*, *Ironweed* and *Blue Steel*, and then operated on a previous Dick Wolf production, *H.E.L.P.*, before taking over *Law & Order* when then-cinematographer Ernest Dickerson, ASC left the series. Makris's other credits include the pilots for *Feds*, *On Seventh Avenue*, *Graham*, *Likely Suspects* and *NYPD Mounted*, and the features *One Man Force* and *The Out-of-Towners*.

See page 52 for in-depth coverage of the director/cinematographer's work on *Law & Order*.

Michael McMurray, CSC
Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict
"Float Like a Butterfly"

The path that led director of photography Michael McMurray to his first Emmy nomination is nearly as interesting as his nominated work. While growing up in Toronto, McMurray was intrigued by the scores of names scrolling by at the end of the films and television shows he watched. After graduating from high school, he immediately landed an entry-level position in the shipping-and-receiving department of the local television station, CFTO Channel 9. Over the course of eight years, his fascination with the visual medium grew, especially when a freelance film or commercial production would move into the studio for a day or two. He eventually left the station to pursue freelance film work, and his curiosity about the power of lighting guided him in a new career direction.

McMurray has since developed a long-standing relationship with Atlantis Films, shooting most of the company's new productions for the last 10 to 12 years, which include the pilot and subsequent series *TekWar*, the series *Traders*, and the company's latest endeavor, *Earth: Final Conflict*, which is produced in association with Kirschner/Roddenberry Productions.

The premise of *Earth: Final Conflict* is that an alien race called the Taelons have come to Earth, where they've peacefully cohabitated with humans for three years. However, some individuals are beginning to suspect that the Taelons are not what they seem.

In devising a visual style for the series, McMurray worked closely with production designer Stephen Roloff. The duo decided to juxtapose the two camps, lending the humans' scenes a crisp, clean look, while taking a colder, more technical approach to the Taelon settings. With a multitude of visual effects integrated throughout every episode, the cameraman elects to shoot all of his footage without diffusion filters, and seldom uses smoke.

"To keep the audience off balance, I like to keep the alien world a little cooler, which I do only through the lighting," says McMurray. "I don't want the Taelons to look too friendly. I don't want the audience to assume that they are here for the good of mankind. The Taelons never really give away their true intentions, so I don't want to give it away through the lighting either. I'll often try to keep the human world a little warmer. The humans are more friendly, more outgoing and what-

you-see-is-what-you-get, except for the small resistance movement that is truly against the Taelons and believe that they are here to take over our planet. I therefore try to keep the resistance part of the human world very dark and contrasty."

As part of an economical strategy, McMurray photographs *Earth: Final Conflict* in 3-perf 35mm on Arriflex BL-4s modified by a local Toronto technician. The cinematographer mainly utilizes Eastman Kodak's EXR 5293 and 5248 stocks for the series' various interiors and exteriors, but will occasionally incorporate Vision 500T 5279 for large night exteriors. Additionally, McMurray almost exclusively uses a 17-102mm Angenieux zoom to cut down the more costly rental of prime lenses. He notes, "The zoom just takes the edge off the crisp, sharp stocks, so we call it our 'filter.'"

Joel Ransom
The X-Files
"The Post-Modern Prometheus"

The photographic rendering of the acclaimed series *The X-Files* (see *AC* June '95) has earned numerous accolades for its cinematographers. In 1993, Thomas Del Ruth, ASC earned an ASC Award nomination for the series' pilot. Subsequent cinematographer John S. Bartley, ASC, CSC earned a 1996 Emmy for the episode "Grotesque," as well as a 1995 Emmy nomination for "One Breath." Bartley also received three ASC Award nominations for the episodes "Duane Barry," "731" and "Grotesque." After taking up the photographic reigns in the series' fourth and fifth seasons, Joel Ransom continued in this honored legacy with his nominated work "The Post-Modern Prometheus," which was directed by *X-Files* creator/executive producer Chris Carter.

As a teenager, Ransom became interested in cinematography during set visits with his father, well-known

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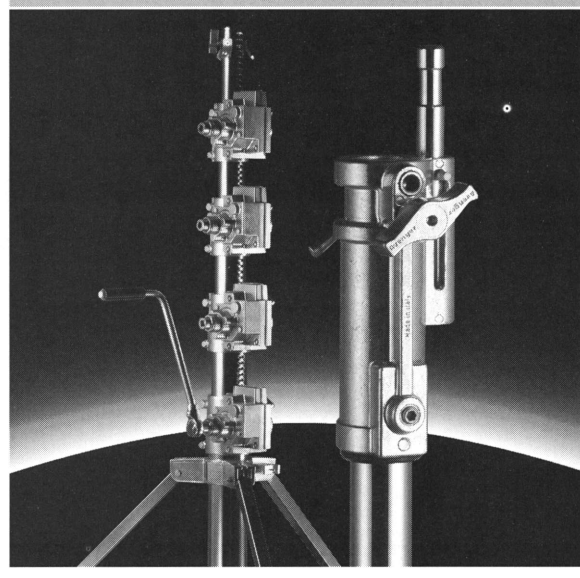
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1998 Emmy Engineering Awards

On June 24, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences celebrated the 1998 Primetime Emmy Engineering Awards at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. The award recipients were honored among their engineering and creative peers during an elegant luncheon held in the hotel's opulent ballroom.

Photo by Christopher Probst.

The Emmy Engineering Award is given to an individual, company, or organization for developments that are either so extensive an improvement on existing methods or so innovative in nature that they materially affect the transmission, recording, or reception of television.

The Emmy Plaque is awarded for achievements that exhibit a high level of engineering and are important to the progress of the industry. The Plaque is given in recognition of engineering achievements that are on a different level of technology and industry importance.

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Awarded to Brian Critchley of Digital Projection International and Larry J. Hornbeck of Texas Instruments for the creation of the Power Displays projector, an innovative illumination, optical/signal processing system that produces brilliant large-screen images.

Digital Projection's Power Displays produce images with more than one billion colors, creating smooth, film-like large-screen images.

At the heart of the Power Display is the Digital Micromirror Device from Texas Instruments, invented by Dr. Larry Hornbeck. Comprising a rectangular array of microscopic hinged mirrors, the DMD allows light to be modulated more accurately than is possible using any alternate technology.

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Awarded to Nat, Ira and Steven Tiffen of Tiffen Manufacturing Corporation for the company's overall contribution to the design and manufacture of state-of-the-art camera lens filters.

The proprietary Tiffen laminating process, fusing two layers of clear glass together through the use of a micro-thin, inorganic, index-matched bonding layer has, to this day, provided the basis for an unprecedented level of color, contrast, resolution and flare control through optical manipulation. These qualities, in the hands of talented directors and cinematographers, have contributed greatly to enhancing the level of video imaging throughout the industry.

Philips Digital Video Systems & Eastman Kodak's Spirit DataCine

Awarded to Michael Broesamle, Uwe Braehler, Volker Massmann and Wolfgang Steinebach of Philips Digital Video Systems and Arthur J. Cosgrove, Andrew F. Kurtz, Roger T. Lees and Leslie G. Moore of Eastman Kodak for the design and manufacture of the industry-standard high-definition digital telecine.

The Spirit DataCine Film Scanner is a joint development between Philips Digital Video Systems and Eastman Kodak. The combination of the Advanced Imaging Head from Eastman, and the precision transport mechanisms and high-speed digital signal processing developed by Philips, has resulted in a new benchmark for high-quality film transfers in both standard-definition and high-definition video standards and high-speed data scanning.

Emmy Plaques

Avid Real-Time Multicamera Systems and Tektronix Lightworks' "Heavyworks" Multistream Editing Systems

Awarded to Patrick O'Connor, Thomas A. Ohanian, Joseph Rice, Victor Young, Nancy Kronenberg, Ken Goekjian, Joel Swan and Eric Peters of Avid Technology, Inc. and Kenneth Gordon, Hugh Steers, John Child, Anita Sinclair, Trevor Morecraft, Neil Roberts and Robert Fearnside of Tektronix for the development of editing systems that allow real-time, multi-stream digital playback for greater ease and efficiency.

Avid's Real-Time Multicamera System has successfully supplanted all analog alternatives. Through the use of real-time digital multi-stream playback, editors can work more efficiently. Through the use of multiple tracks of real-time digital audio, high-quality sound tracks are routinely laid out, and in some cases, delivered as the final audio component of a show. A wide range of digital video effects, transitions and compositing functions are also available.

Tektronix, Inc.'s Lightworks' Pentium-based "Heavyworks" Multi-

stream Editing System was the first system to support both multi-camera material editing in real time and to produce both picture and sound roughcuts on the fly. Key features include a rendered effects package with bluescreen capability, cropping, resizing and graphics import/export, and real-time effects comprising 20 different wipe patterns, ramped dissolves and superimpositions.

Charles F. Jenkins Lifetime Achievement Award

Awarded to Yves Faroudja for the development of key patents in the arena of NTSC processing, encoding, decoding, enhancement, and noise reduction. Mr. Faroudja was at the forefront in developing the Sony U-matic, S-VHS, and Hi-8 recorders.

Faroudja is the founder and chief technical officer of Faroudja Laboratories, Inc. of Sunnyvale, California. After earning an MSEE degree from the Ecloe Superieure d'Electricite, Paris, he worked at ITT Research Laboratories in France and at NATO in Italy as a research engineer until 1965, when he moved to the United States.

Faroudja Laboratories has been instrumental in improving video enhancement, noise reduction and NTSC encoding/decoding technologies, as well as pioneering line-multiplying technology. Many of these processes have been licensed to manufacturers of ¾", S-VHS, HQ-VHS, and 8mm video recorders.

Faroudja holds more that 55 U.S. and foreign patents, has been honored with the Monitor Award for Excellence in Engineering, and received the SMPTE David Sarnoff Gold Medal Award in 1987. Additionally, he received an Emmy in 1991 for the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in New York for his work on NTSC advancement. ■

Vancouver gaffer Fred Ransom. He later gained experience while working at Panavision in Vancouver, and eventually worked as an assistant cameraman. After pulling focus on *21 Jump Street* for two years, Ransom moved up to operator, and has served in that capacity on such features as *Happy Gilmore*, *Wagons East*, and *Deep Rising*. *The X-Files* became Ransom's first series as a director of photography when he was promoted from operator last season after the residing cinematographer, Jon Joffin, departed the show.

Now shooting its sixth season, the series has relocated its production from British Columbia to soundstages at 20th Century Fox in Los Angeles, where it is being photographed by Bill Roe.

A tongue-in-cheek spin on the *Frankenstein* mythos, "The Post-Modern Prometheus" is unique among the series' visually arresting body of work in that the episode was shot in black-and-white. Says Ransom of the stylistic decision, "I felt it would stand out. It was a gamble, but it was a more lighthearted episode. We used a lot of wide lenses, up close, to give things a cartoony, comic-like effect."

Ransom, who is currently shooting the sci-fi series *Mercy Point*, notes that "Prometheus" was his first opportunity to shoot in black-and-white, which prompted him to send out his second-unit team to do some tests with Kodak's Double-X 5222 stock. The results alerted the cameraman that the broad exposure latitude he enjoys while using current color emulsions is beyond what's possible with black-and-white negative: "The tests worried me a bit, because I felt the exposures would have to be dead-on, but after the first day of [main-unit] shooting, I found there to be more latitude than I expected. The footage turned out beautifully."

Ransom notes that the primary difference between shooting color and monochrome is that fore-

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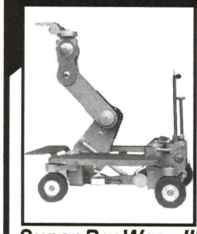
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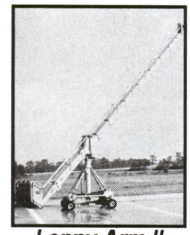
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ground/background separation is of much greater importance. "We used a lot more backlight than usual," he notes, adding that actress Gillian Anderson's dark red hair required additional attention to prevent her from fading into *The X-Files*' requisite shadows.

Only one sequence for the episode was shot on the show's normal sets. The concert conclusion was photographed at a Vancouver nightclub, while a variety of day and night exteriors were shot in the surrounding countryside. "The show is a slight take-off on [the Tim Burton-directed short film] *Frankenweenie*," says Ransom. "It has a comedic touch with a bit of horror mixed in."

MOVIE AND MINISERIES

✶ Eric Van Haren Noman
What the Deaf Man Heard

Eric Van Haren Noman has earned two ASC Award nominations, recognizing his work on *Lena: My Hundred Children* (1988) and *A Cry For Help: The Tracey Thurman Story* (1989). He also received an Emmy for the ABC afternoon special *Egyptian Weavers*. Born in Holland, the cinematographer started out as a camera assistant in London — where he once worked for the late, great Stanley Cortez, ASC on *The Bridge at Remagen* — and subsequently became a camera operator before relocating to the United States. He earned his first Emmy nomination for the gripping footage of terrorist activities that he shot during the 1972 Munich Olympics. Van Haren Noman's extensive television credits include *Robin Cook's Terminal, Out of Darkness, For the Love of Nancy, Lies He Told, A Mother's Prayer, Her Own Rule, An Unexpected Life, The Love Letter, Sky's On Fire* and the pilot for *Over My Dead Body*. He has also photographed the features *Inside Edge, Hero and the Terror* and *Playing for Keeps*.

Directed by John Kent Harrison, *What the Deaf Man Heard* stars Matthew Modine as an orphaned young man who has convinced everyone in the small town of Barrington, Georgia, that he's a deaf mute — a ruse that allows him to become privy to almost everyone's secrets. The telefilm was the highest-rated movie on television last year, and the highest-rated Hallmark Hall of Fame Presentation in six years. More than 37 million people are estimated to have seen it.

"We had a fantastic crew in Wilmington," says Van Haren Noman. "Everything was shot at locations and on adapted sets. The look was often determined in part by the period, which stretched from the 1940s to the 1960s. The colors are more neutral in the earlier scenes, with no strong primary colors in the costumes or design. John and I went by our gut feelings. I just shot things the way I saw and felt them."

Alan Caso
George Wallace (Part I)

Alan Caso won this year's ASC Award (see *AC* May '98) for his Emmy-nominated work on the TNT miniseries *George Wallace*, which chronicles the political flurry surrounding the controversial former governor of Alabama (played by Gary Sinise). Caso began his career as a gaffer, later becoming a camera/Steadicam operator and working with such luminaries as Jost Vacano, ASC, BVK, Chris Menges, BSC, Russell Carpenter, ASC and Bruce Surtees before making the move up to cinematographer on such projects as *The Stepfather III, In the Midnight Hour, Summer of Fear, Tonya and Nancy* and the television series *Raven*.

George Wallace was skillfully directed by John Frankenheimer, who also earned an Emmy nomination for his contribution to the program. Since the filmmakers were attempting to depict several decades in the politician's life, they chose to integrate actual archival footage — found on various film and video formats — throughout the film, and utilized both color and black-and-white stocks to aid in matching the various periods and textures. "We needed to find a way to match our footage with the archival material and have smooth transitions," Caso notes. "We wanted it to look like the kind of film that has been sitting on the shelf for a while. It had to have the look of film that has aged, yet still be visually palatable.

"As a former Steadicam operator, I always look for something more than just a camera sitting on a dolly for my A-camera," he adds. "I always use a jib arm for my regular A-camera work. For *Wallace* we also used the Steadicam — not just daily, but in a portion of every scene. That approach provided me with a fluidity and integration of style, which was a necessity on the film."

Ron Garcia, ASC
The Day Lincoln Was Shot

Ron Garcia earned a prior Emmy nomination in 1993 for the first segment of the miniseries *Murder in the Heartland* (see *AC* Oct. '93), which also received an ASC Award nomination. He has also earned ASC nominations in 1990 for the *Twin Peaks* pilot and again in 1995 for *Divas*, as well as a 1991 Cable ACE Award for the western *El Diablo*. Garcia's extensive television credits include *Brave New World, Alien Nation: The Udara Legacy, If Looks Could Kill, Awake to Murder, L.A. Takedown*, and the series *EZ Streets*. His feature credits include *Storyville, Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, and *Disorganized Crime*.

Directed by John Gray, *The Day Lincoln Was Shot* chronicles the last day in the life of Abraham Lincoln (Lance Henriksen), and is

told from the respective perspectives of both the President and his killer, John Wilkes Booth (Rob Morrow). "John's first impulse was to shoot the film in black-and-white," Garcia points out. "Of course, the networks still shy away from the use of black-and-white, but John had liked what I had done photographically on the miniseries *Murder in the Heartland*, which had a more muted gray palette. He therefore decided that he wanted a little more of a 'blue' look throughout the whole picture. I was a little weary of biasing the negative to a real *chroma* blue, so I told him we could add *some* blue in and then be able to push it forward or pull it back in the telecine. When we finally began timing the picture, the blue look slowly started to go away and we got back into some color saturation. The blue look was a bit too much and it definitely needed to have some life added back into it." The cameraman employed Fuji film stocks throughout the production.

Garcia's greatest challenge on the picture — other than transforming the 5' 6" Henriksen into the towering figure of Lincoln — was in re-creating the period lighting within the large-scale setting of the Ford Theater, where the President was shot. "The style I set out to achieve for *Lincoln* was to have the film feel as if it were entirely lamp-lit. I didn't want to glamorize the look with backlight and shafts of light here and there. People in those times lived just by lamps, so in my lighting design I basically tried to work with single sources and make everything look as natural as possible.

"Given that strategy, my biggest concern was how to light the [Ford Theater] stage in a way that was realistic to the period. Fortunately, production designer Roy Smith reminded me that in those days, they used acetylene lamps as footlights. That gave me the motivation to put six 2K Molettes in the cans at the front of the stage. My

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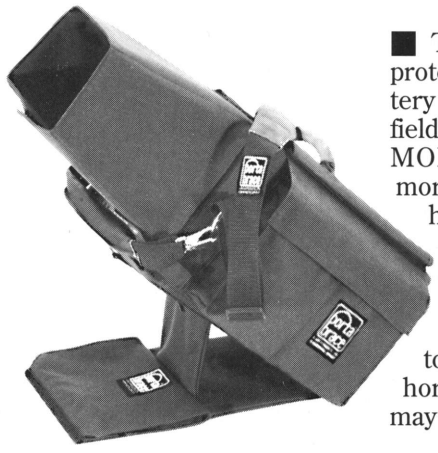

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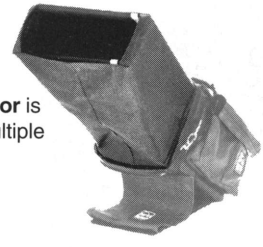

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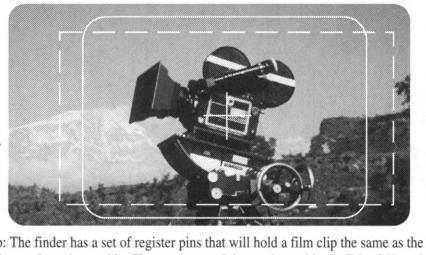

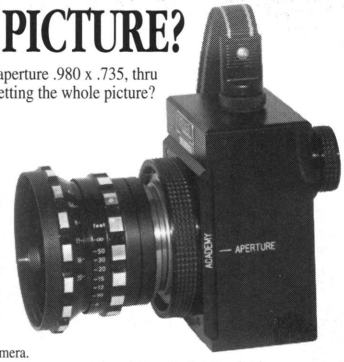

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gaffer, Peter Clarson, was worried about the multiple shadows on the wall behind [the actors on stage] from all of the lamps, but I reasoned that if that was the way it was really done back then, I was going to go for reality.

"The theater also had a 60' ceiling, so it was physically and monetarily impossible to hang anything. I wound up using two of my 4K Airstar helium balloons for ambiance, as well as light motivated from the stage. Roy added a few [practical] gas lamps to the walls, and it all came together quite nicely."

Sergei Kozlov
Merlin

Russian-born cinematographer Sergei Kozlov earned his first Emmy nomination with the miniseries *Merlin*. Kozlov graduated from Moscow's VGIK film school in 1989 and continued his studies at the Rockport Maine Film Workshops before starting his career by shooting music videos and commercials. His first feature, *Children of Iron Gods*, won him a 1993 Nika Award. The cameraman won the Nika again the following year for *Kitia Ismailova*, and was also nominated for *Limita* in that same year. Kozlov's other credits include *Natasa*, *Music for December*, *Russian Ragtime* and last year's miniseries *The Odyssey*, which earned Emmys for director Andrei Konchalovsky and special effects supervisor Mike McGee.

The NBC/Hallmark Entertainment miniseries *Merlin* was directed by Emmy nominee Steve Barron and features a stellar cast, including Sam Neill, Isabella Rossellini, Miranda Richardson, Helena Bonham Carter John Gielgud and James Earl Jones. Filmed in Wales and London's historic Pinewood Studios, *Merlin* uses the familiar myth of King Arthur as its backdrop while chronicling the life of the fabled wizard (played by Neill).

Gale Tattersall
From the Earth to the Moon

HBO's epic space program represented Gale Tattersall's first foray into the televisual realm, and earned the British-born cinematographer his first Emmy Award nomination (see complete coverage of the miniseries in *AC* April '98).

Tattersall began his career by shooting documentaries and operating for such esteemed cinematographers as Philippe Rousselot, AFC, David Watkin, BSC, Michael Seresin, BSC and John Alcott. His other credits include the features *The Commitments*, *Wild Orchid*, *Virtuosity*, *Hideaway* and *Tank Girl*, as well as numerous commercials, including the recent Nike extravaganza

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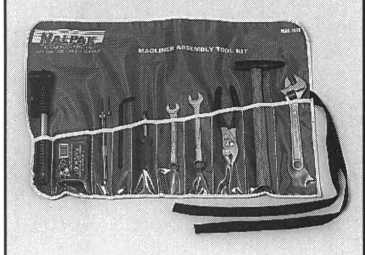

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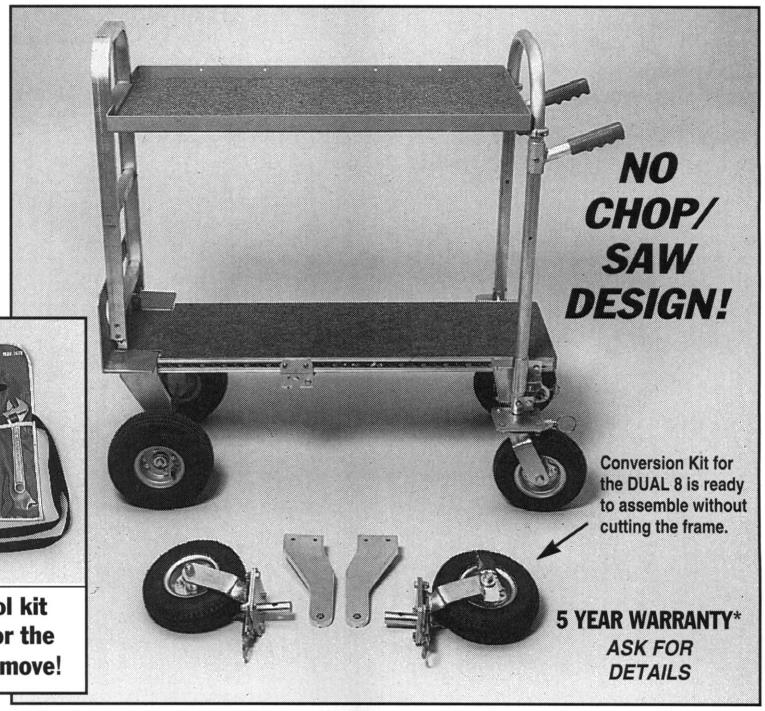

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"Airport '98" (*AC* Aug. '98), directed by John Woo.

From the Earth to the Moon garnered a total of 17 Emmy nominations. Tattersall's nominated segment, "Can We Do This?," was directed by executive producer Tom Hanks, who also received an Emmy nod.

William Wages, ASC
Buffalo Soldiers

William Wages earned this year's ASC Award in the MOW/Pilot category for the Turner Network Television production *Buffalo Soldiers* (see *AC* May '98), his second consecutive win after taking the Award in 1996 for *Riders of the Purple Sage* (which also earned Wages a Cable ACE Award). The cameraman previously earned four other ASC Award nominations, but *Buffalo Soldiers* marks the cameraman's first Emmy Award nomination.

The film was Wages' sixth collaboration with director Charles Haid, and began production just after the duo had completed *Riders of the Purple Sage*. Despite his ongoing association with Haid, the cameraman says that he always looks at the strength of a given script before deciding which projects he will shoot. "Or course, I was immediately interested in *Buffalo Soldiers* because Charlie and I have had such a long working relationship," Wages attests. "But what really attracted me to the project was the script. I thought it was an amazing story that was wonderfully written. When I found out that Danny Glover was starring in the film, there was no question that I was going to shoot it! I get offers to shoot feature films all the time, but one of the reasons I mainly shoot for television is that the stories are often better. I'd rather shoot a really good television movie than a mediocre feature. That may sound odd, but I'm not in this business for anything except the gratification of making good films. Charlie is the same way. As long as I'm making a living at it, I'm happy. You can't buy the fulfillment I get from that.

"I don't think a film like *Buffalo Soldiers* would have been made as a feature," he continues. "I don't think any studio would have backed it, because they probably wouldn't have felt that there was an audience for it. God bless TNT, because they'll spend the money to tell these stories. *Riders of the Purple Sage* is another example. Even with Ed Harris and Amy Madigan acting and producing that film, it wasn't considered feature material in today's Hollywood. But I think we made it as a feature film, just as I feel that *Buffalo Soldiers* is a feature. Both of them just happened to be shown on television." ■

Additional reporting by David Heuring.

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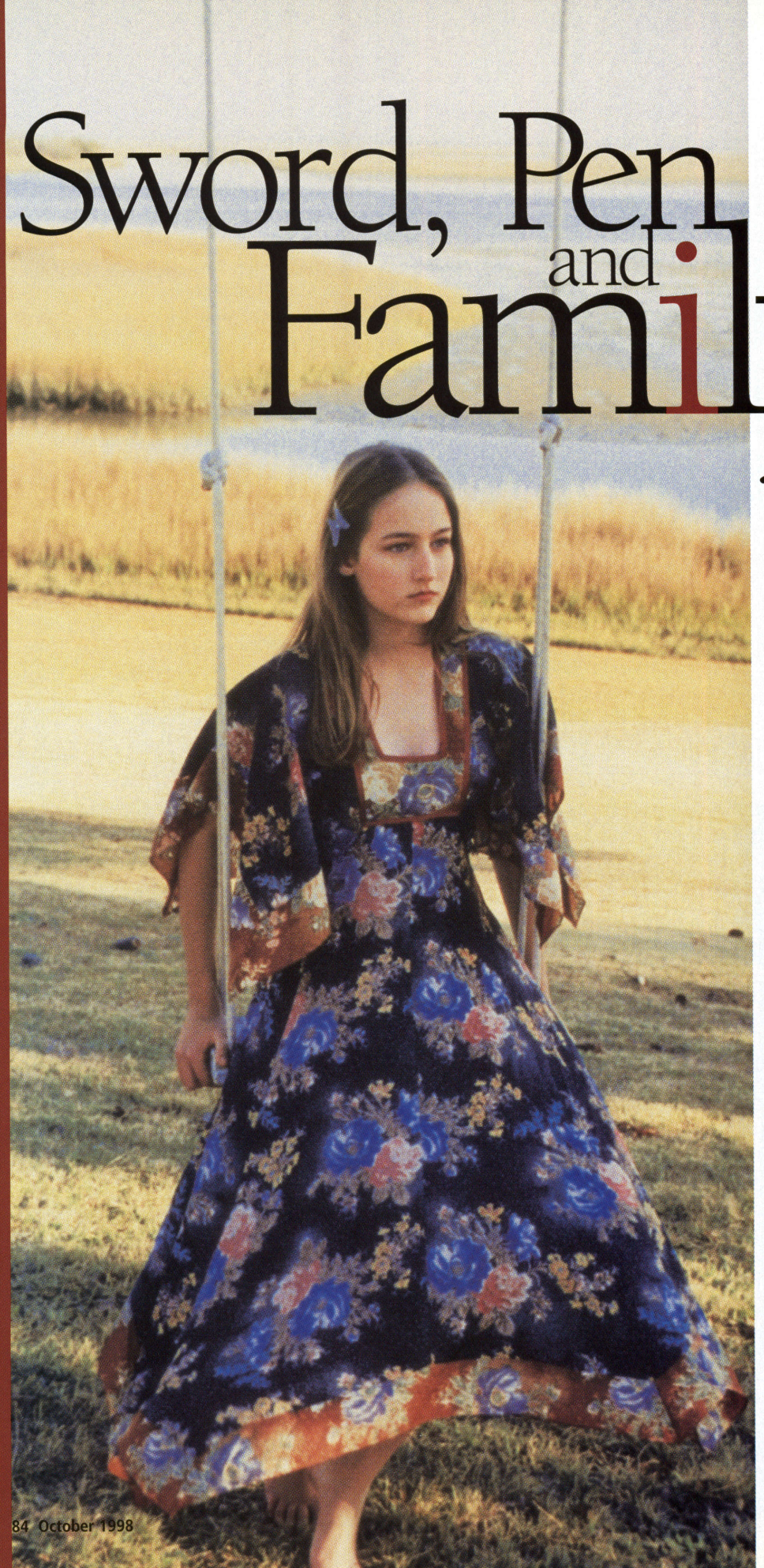


Director James Ivory explores a more contemporary era in *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, a heartfelt familial drama photographed by Jean-Marc Fabre.

by Eric Rudolph

Photography by Seth Rubin

A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries is a film that subtly and gently works its charms. An intimate, realistic photographic approach effectively bolsters the satisfying and bittersweet story, which traces the emotional arc of a close-knit family.

The latest film from producer Ismail Merchant, director James Ivory and scenarist Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, *Soldier's Daughter* mixes a cast of appealing veterans, including Kris Kristofferson and Barbara Hershey, with a delightful newcomer, luminous young lead actress Leelee Sobieski.

The film is based on the semi-autobiographical book of the same

name by Kylie Jones, the daughter of James Jones, the soldier-turned-author who penned *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line.* After achieving success as a writer, Jones moved to Paris, where his daughter was born. The family remained there until Kylie and her adopted French brother were teenagers, and James began to suffer ill health. The clan then moved back to Eastern Long Island, where the Jones children had a difficult time adjusting to the drastic change in cultures.

In *Soldier's Daughter,* the James Jones character, renamed Bill Willis, is beautifully portrayed by Kristofferson. He looms large over the proceedings as a gruff, foul-mouthed, but extraordinarily loving, understanding and down-to-earth husband and father, who also has the benefit of being financially well-off thanks to the success of his books.

Barbara Hershey plays Bill's free-spirited Italian-American wife, Marcella, an aging beauty who fiercely defends her children from interlopers but who is a bit bewildered by some of Bill's parenting decisions — such as allowing a high school boyfriend of their daughter, Channe (Sobieski), to stay overnight in her room after bluntly asking the couple if they've been sleeping together.

Director Ivory chose cinematographer Jean-Marc Fabre (*A Self-Made Hero, L'Age des Possibles*) because Pierre L'Homme (*Maurice, Jefferson in Paris*) was unable to shoot the film when its start date was changed. "Jean-Marc shot a few days of my last film, *Surviving Picasso,* when Tony Pierce-Roberts wasn't available, and I liked what I saw," Ivory explains. "I also thought it would be good to have a foreigner shoot the scenes after the family moves from Paris to America." The family feels displaced in their new, less glamorous suburban surroundings, and Ivory wanted the audience to see this world through the eyes of someone who was "fresh and not jaded by having lived there and seen it a million times."

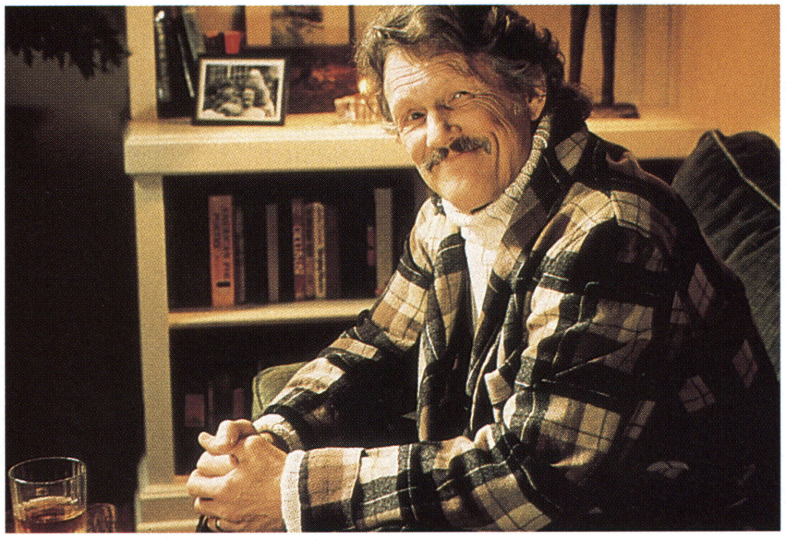
Because *Soldier's Daughter* is a straightforward family tale, Ivory and Fabre determined that visual simplicity should rule the day. The filmmakers chose to shoot in a standard aspect ratio (1.66:1, which will be projected as 1.85:1 in the States) in order to create imagery that would be closer to reality. The cinematographer notes, "I thought that was more appropriate for a family story. This is also a smaller film than the last few Merchant-Ivory productions, so that bolstered our decision to work simply. Plus, we needed to be free to change setups at the last minute in our cramped practical locations."

Of course, the simple setups did not mean that the lighting wasn't handled carefully. "I always try to keep my lighting as simple as possible," Fabre explains. "We used a lot of diffused light that we controlled with flags, because we didn't want the light spilling everywhere." Kino Flos were used extensively for close-ups, especially on the film's women, and although the light was generally soft to start with or diffused, Fresnel sources also played a role. "I tried to use whatever lighting style I felt the scene called for," the cameraman says.

A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries was shot almost entirely on Fuji 250 ASA daylight stock (8651). This decision, says Fabre, obviated the use of HMI lights and lens diffusion. "The Fuji stock is somewhat softer than Kodak and provided enough diffusion," Fabre explains. He adds that practical light sources that appeared in the frame were always reinforced with movie lights.

Fabre notes the decision to use Fuji was not budget-motivated. "The last few Merchant-Ivory films were shot on Fuji, so I decided not to make a change. I normally use Kodak, but I was quite happy with the Fuji 250D daylight stock. It has good color and good highs and lows." Although he found the colors less saturated and the contrast not as great as with Kodak emulsions, Fabre says that the Fuji stock allowed him to achieve "quite nice" skin tones. "The film was all about the characters and their faces. The set decorations and clothes had a lot of contrast and saturation, so having less of both in the stock was actually a benefit," he explains.

Even though Fabre notes that the Fuji film had a tendency to go somewhat greenish and magenta, in the highlights and shadows respectively, he feels that the stock worked well for the film: "Kodak tends to go red, and in low light it is not so good.



Opposite: Channe Willis (Leelee Sobieski) contemplates her life in the family garden. Cameraman Jean-Marc Fabre relied on Fuji daylight stock throughout most of the picture. Left: Writer Bill Willis (Kris Kristofferson) was based on real-life novelist James Jones.

Photos courtesy of October Releasing.

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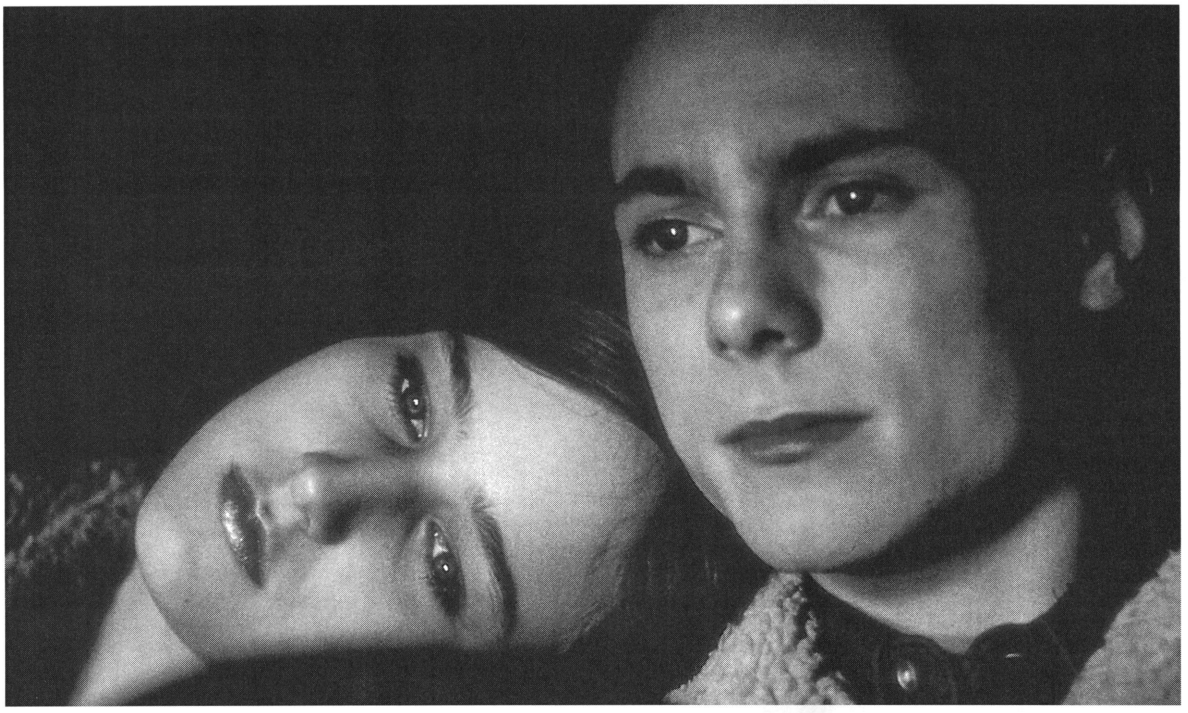


Right: Channe and her boyfriend Francis, (Anthony Roth Costanzo). Noting that *A Soldier's Daughter* is primarily about "the characters and their faces," Fabre (bottom photo, at eyepiece, with director James Ivory in foreground) felt that the Fuji stock's skin-tone rendition was quite good. Opposite: Ivory (foreground) and producer Ismail Merchant. This picture marks their 25th feature-film collaboration.

I don't know which stocks I'll use in the future, but using Fuji on *A Soldier's Daughter* was interesting and different."

The Fuji 250D stock was rated by Fabre at 200 ASA. "I did tests with overexposure and overdeveloping and found that a third of a stop of overexposure worked best," he relates. "The Fuji stock's blacks aren't as rich as Kodak's, so I was careful to be quite generous with the lighting even in dark sequences. The dark scenes were printed down but they were never underexposed. I didn't want to risk the blacks going gray."

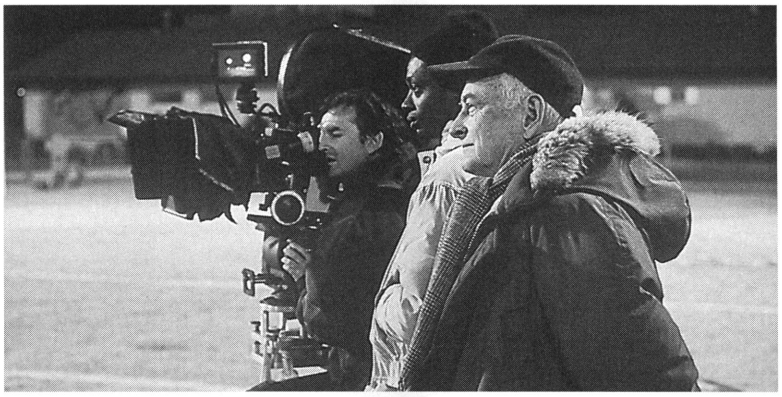
Night exteriors and dark night interiors, however, were shot with Kodak Vision 500T 5279. "I didn't like the Fuji 500 film, and the Fuji 250D was a good match for the granularity of the Vision 500T," Fabre submits. "When I mix Kodak's Vision 500T with their 100 ASA EXR 5248, I think it looks terrible, because the definition is so different."

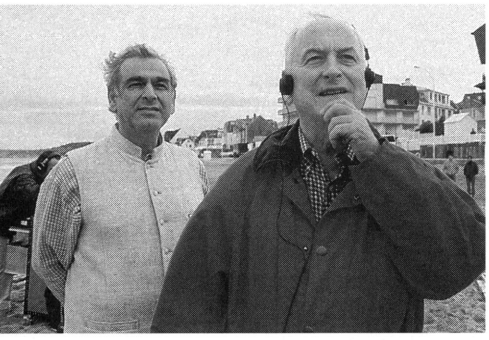
Fabre's main-unit camera was a Panavision Platinum with Primo primes; zooms were used very sparingly. "I mostly used the 35mm and 50mm Primos. The Primos with the Fuji stock was a good combination; the lenses helped to sharpen the Fuji film."

Soldier's Daughter was mostly a one-camera shoot. "We had two cameras for the football game scene, but I prefer not to do that; I like to control everything," Fabre maintains. In general, camera movements were kept simple, and were motivated by the action of the actors. "We did mostly slow moves that were restrained in their range."

The setting of *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries* is almost evenly split between the family's rambling, expansive, multi-level Paris apartment and a large, charming old house near a bay in the States. All of the locations save for one were practicals, and thus were usually quite cramped. "There was a definite lack of space and access most of the time," Fabre recalls. "The neighbors in Paris did not want us there, and so we could not always erect scaffolds to close off the apartment windows." This was quite frustrating for the cinematographer, as was the fact that the entire shoot took place during the very short days of fall.

The problem with the windows at the Paris apartment was solved to some degree — especially during nighttime party scenes often filmed during the day — by simply





avoiding the windows, a strategy which lends a close intimate feel that happens to be entirely appropriate to the story.

Fabre, who is in his thirties, also made a decision to work quickly. "On his last several films, James Ivory had cinematographers who worked a little more deliberately. I thought that the budget and the era of this picture, which takes place during the late Sixties and early Seventies, called for something different — a bit of a speedier approach than some of the other Merchant-Ivory period pieces, which are set so far in the past. James liked that; we got more shots in than we planned, and we were able to integrate more ideas that came to us on the set than if I had worked more slowly." The film crew spent seven weeks in France and four in the States.

Ivory works by keeping a somewhat "distant eye on all aspects on the production, which I think is a good approach," Fabre explains. "He's very respectful of others, and he knows what he wants and how to get others to help him achieve those goals. He gives a lot of responsibility to the people who work with him. He did not dictate to me; he was very confident even though we'd never really worked together before, except for a few days. He does not get involved in silly details."

Ivory concurs, noting that although he shot his first films himself and has always felt he "has a feel for composition," he is comfortable turning over the photography to another person. "I still have ideas on

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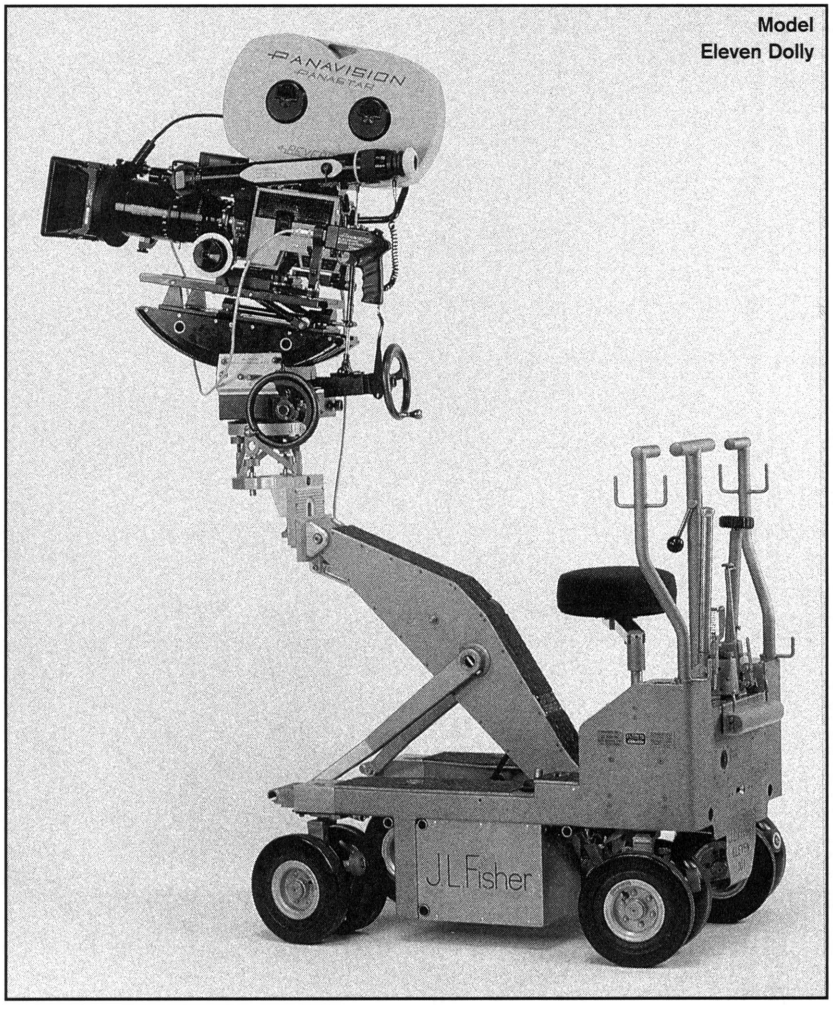

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Sword, Pen and Family

Fabre used carefully cut soft light throughout the picture, often relying on Kino Flo units for close-ups.

lighting, but I don't like to interfere. We decide on the basic camera position together, but I leave the fine-tuning up to the cinematographer. I want him to be free to create and find new things."

Both of the film's main interior locations offered other vexations in addition to a lack of maneuvering room. The Paris apartment had a lot of white wall space which could not be changed. "I had quite a problem with the white walls," Fabre grumbles. He used flags to tone down the glaring reflective qualities of the walls, but there was only so much he could do. "I'm not very satisfied with the scenes played against those walls," he acknowledges.

The two basic French and American locations also have starkly different looks, which requires some adjustment on the part of the audience. The French apartment is close and filled with dark decor; the light is cool and suggests fall and winter. The colors red, blue and brown dominate. The American scenes has more of a contemporary feel, even though the house is old and the scenes take place in the Seventies.

The American house sits on a small hill and has many large windows that fill the house with warm light reflected from the tall sea grass of the surrounding marshland. The Paris apartment, on the other hand, is an enclosed world which admits very little light. Most of the other scenes in France also take place indoors, while the America-set sequences offer more exteriors.

This contrast worked in favor of the narrative, however. "The sun coming in the windows from outside

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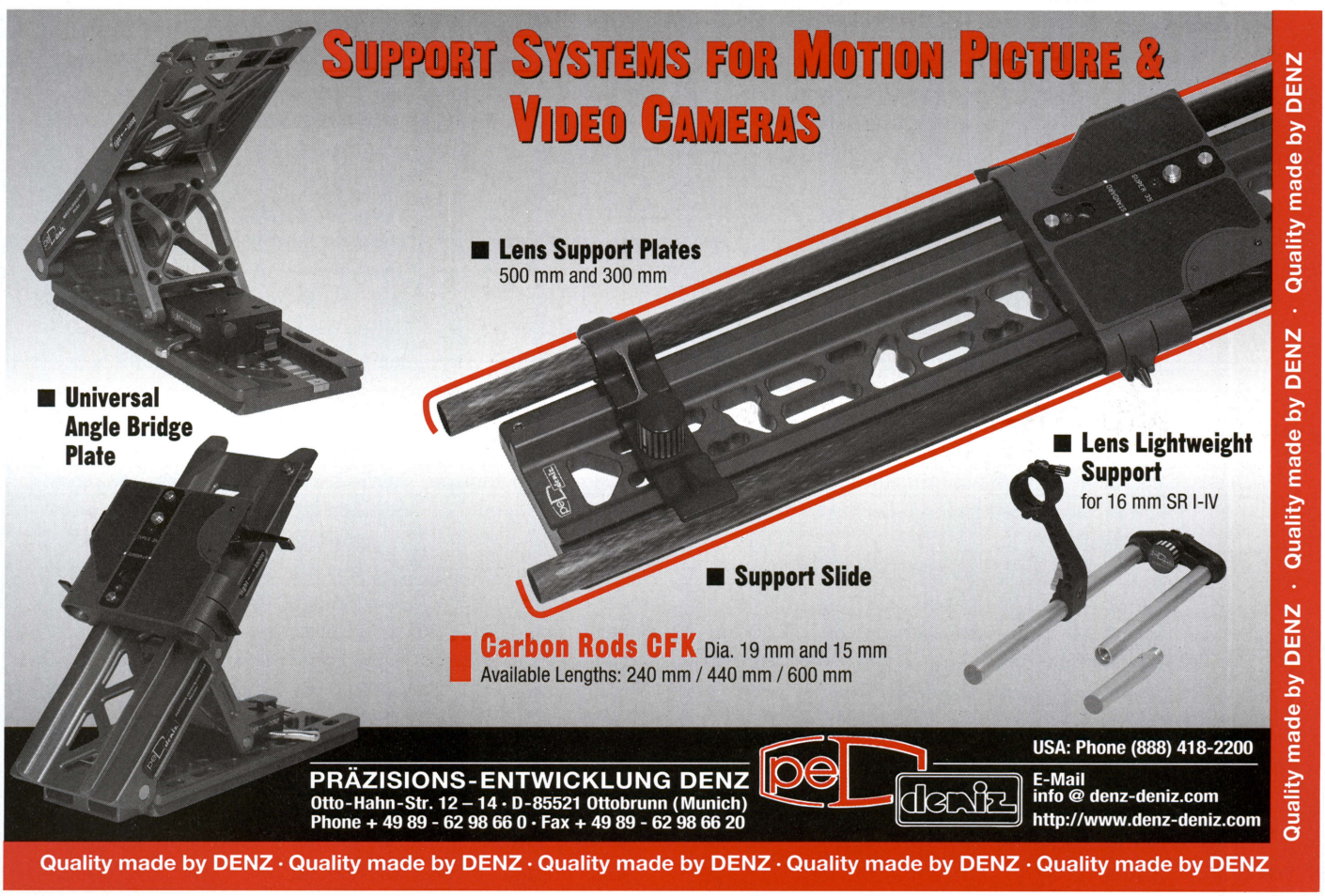
in the U.S. scenes was in sync with the story," says Fabre. Although Bill Willis's health is falling, the family moves "in hope of finding something more" than they had in Paris, perhaps "better American doctors and more serenity," the cameraman offers.

Another challenge for the cinematographer was the fact that lead actress Leelee Sobieski, 15 years old at the time of production, had to span an age range that took her from pre-adolescent to mature high-schooler. While the filmmakers employed the standard tactics which enable young actresses to age onscreen (such as adjusting makeup, hair and wardrobe), Fabre also played an important role in Sobieski's gradual transformation. "When she is a young adolescent, the age when girls haven't yet started looking at themselves much, I took no special care with her lighting at all. She would get into the lighting that was there and I paid no particular attention to her," he explains. "As she becomes interested in boys, we took a bit more care with her lighting." Later, while shooting scenes that took place after the family moved to the States, Fabre had his cue to start "making Leelee prettier, lighting her like an actress, in a more sophisticated way."

Fabre found that the young actress's somewhat angular facial structure was difficult to light, but eventually learned that a soft front light placed a bit low worked well. "Leelee is very pretty, but a bit of a challenge," he contends. Fabre's lighting ministrations produced stunning results; Sobieski fairly glows in her later close-ups, and the effect strongly bolsters the coming-of-age storyline.

Toward the end of the film, Channe is seriously adrift in her unsophisticated American high school, which she and her brother both hate. She wears dark glasses indoors and keeps to herself when she is not having sex with boorish boys in their cars. After enduring his

Fabre gradually modified his lighting to visually help suggest Channe's maturation.



Sword, Pen and Family

Channe and adopted brother Billy as children (played by Samuel Gruen and Luisa Conlon).

children's shared glum demeanor at a high school football game, Bill Willis summons Channe for a heart-to-heart talk, during which she admits that her promiscuity is simply an attempt to find a way to fit in.

In one of his better scenes among his excellent work in the film, Kristofferson explains that boys Channe's age know nothing about sex, and think that when a girl sleeps with them, they are getting something over on her. "Were you like that, Daddy?" she asks. "Of course I was," he responds unabashedly. "It took me a long time to learn that when a woman sleeps with me, she is giving me something precious." He counsels her to ignore the name-calling of her peers and to bring the next boy she is interested in home to meet her father first.

Sobieski is lovingly and ever-so-softly lit in her close-ups in this scene, with a Kino Flo set close to her face and low. She seems to turn into a glowing, radiant, confident young woman before our eyes. This scene is close to the heart of *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries,* a film that never resorts to flash or melodrama. Its straightforward approach and warm, loving, unconventional family dynamics are likely to move viewers to tears.

Fabre had never worked in the States before and found the American crew "very skillful and professional, but less emotionally involved with the film than a typical French crew. I think I prefer the French approach, but we had a good experience. They taught me a lot and I think I taught them some things as well."

The challenges of working in a house flooded with light were ameliorated somewhat by the larger size of the American crew. Fabre could thus more readily use flags and diffusion, which helped him control the ever-present exterior light. "In France we do not have a key grip who works with flags and diffusion; the electricians handle that," he notes. "Having the extra pair of hands enabled me to have greater control over the light," he notes.

For a memorable night interior sequence in which Willis has returned from the hospital, Fabre created some exemplary night interior illumination. In the scene, the father summons adopted son Billy (Jesse Bradford) to his study. Willis can barely be seen because the room is so dark. When Billy approaches, his father turns on a small desk lamp which adds just a touch more light. Kris Kristofferson's rugged features are dramatically and evocatively cut and highlighted by the close side-light. "Even after Kris turns on the lamp, the scene is still quite dark," says Fabre. "But by this point in the story, Willis has become quite ill and fading out; he has only a few scenes left in the picture, so that dark lighting seemed right."

In keeping with the idea of Willis's slow fade, another late scene with Kristofferson, Hershey and Sobieski is played in a room lit only by candles and a fireplace (which is not shown). The light is a rich and fluctuating amber; Fabre used a set of gelled lamps running on flicker generators programmed to approximate the fluttering firelight. However, he is used to controlling such lights manually, and was not that happy with the effect. "With the programmed lights, you get the same

effect all the time; I normally like to work with it and increase and decrease the changes as the takes proceed. That approach for me is more sensitive." The golden amber and deep amber gels used on the lights, which create a thick, hot, dense reddish glow, did please Fabre, however.

A similarly lit scene in the bedroom of the Willis's Paris home, in which the room's lighting is motivated by a black-and-white television set, was done by turning ¼ blue-gelled lamps on and off manually, which Fabre thought worked much more effectively.

A key scene in which Willis lies in a hospital bed while Channe types part of the novel he is struggling to finish was the only one in the entire film shot in a studio, because a practical hospital location could not be secured. "It was the only scene lit exactly as I wanted," Fabre says, indicating the depth of the compromise forced upon him by the small practical locations. "I used a mixture of hard Fresnel light on Leelee Sobieski and Kino Flos cut with flags and scrims for the room," which has something of the feel of an Army field hospital, with curtains that suggest tents — a fitting look for the sick-room of a former soldier. Fabre notes that the scene was printed down substantially to give it a darker, more ominous look.

The hospital scene also encapsulates the warm, bittersweet tone of the film. While typing, Channe begins to cry. Her father, severely ill with heart disease, says, "Sweetheart, you know what I always told you," referring to the maxim that serves as the film's title. Channe replies, "Yes Daddy, but I'm not a soldier's daughter anymore; I'm a writer's daughter." In a wry and loving response, Willis tells her, "Oh, well that's okay then; they cry all the time!"

After Willis loses his battle with his hereditary heart disease, the family goes through a bracingly real-

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The character of Marcella Willis also undergoes a transformation, which required actress Barbara Hershey to entrust Fabre with creating the appropriate appearances for her.

istic mourning period. Barbara Hershey wears drastic makeup to etch the stress of the loss on her face, and in keeping with the mood, Fabre took "no special care with her lighting" in the mourning scenes. When Marcella begins to rebound, Hershey's makeup becomes more conventional; she is once again lit like an actress and "is more beautiful than ever," says Fabre.

Hershey, who has been a film star since her early teens in the late Sixties, was initially concerned about her onscreen appearance, as are many actresses of a certain age. "She was tense because she was working in France, where she didn't know anyone. She knew I wasn't using any diffusion on the lenses. She asked me to be careful of this and of that with her face. I'm afraid my response was somewhat cool, perhaps because I'm young, and I think she was a little surprised by my reaction. It took her a while to gain confidence in my work. But she did, and things went well from that point. I think she is very beautiful and looks great in this film."

Fabre always operates the camera on his films. He explains, "For me, the picture is one thing; the lighting goes with the framing and I don't like to separate the two. I'm also able to work more quickly this way. I also like to be near the actors and to the light. I look

through the camera and I see immediately what needs to be changed."

As the film ends, the surviving Willis family members begin to rebound from their loss. Sitting on their front porch on a beautiful day with the setting sun visible through the house's windows, Marcella Willis happily reminisces about her late husband, lamenting only that he was continually reluctant to dance with her. Channe rushes into the house and puts on a lively Latin record, prompting Marcella to ask her adopted son to dance, but he too demurs.

Trying to capture the setting sun in a series of shots that included dialogue was, of course, a challenge for Fabre. Additionally, the crew had only a few hours spread over two days to shoot the scenes. Only a third of the scene used real sunsets; the rest was re-created with gelled lights and filtration. "When Channe was in the house putting on the record, it was actually raining," he recalls. "To simulate the setting sun, I used a 6K HMI outside with a ½ orange gel. I cheated by closing a curtain on the window. When the characters are on the porch, the sunset you see through the windows is real. Naturally, the sunset did not last nearly long enough for the dialogue scenes, so for those we used gelled lights and an orange lens filter. The orange filter was also used for the film's final shot." Despite these technical necessities, Fabre was happy with the results.

After her son's gentle rebuff, Marcella begins to dance with Channe, who is delighted to take a twirl. The low setting sun is still visible through the windows. In the picture's final moment, the family strolls down the hill to their dock. Long shadows from the trees fall on the yard, and the strong orange light from the sunset washes the scene. The Willises proclaim it to be a beautiful day. ■

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Short Takes

Music Videos: Classic Rockin' and Techno Travels

Guitarist Brian Setzer rocks though a set with his orchestra while filming at the former restaurant lounge at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

Photos by Barbara Benvil.

A Jumpin' Joint
by Kathleen Fairweather

When director Eric Heimbold and cinematographer Tony Molina first heard the big-band blast delivered as the Brian Setzer Orchestra performed the Louis Prima swing standard "Jump, Jive and Wail," they knew they were in for a wild filmmaking ride. The path they chose for the ensemble's music video combined the grand scale and nostalgia of an old MGM musical with the technology of today. Recalling the duo's enthusiasm for the project, Molina offers, "Eric and I knew we'd been given the rare chance to blend contemporary filmmaking with the look and sound of classic big-band rock."

The partners envisioned a combination of the energy and excitement of musical films mixed with the gleeful spirit of *American Graffiti*. "We decided to create an environment that displayed a nostalgic reflection of Fifties rock culture with contemporary attitude and flair. The theme of the video therefore became a Nineties sock-hop. We wanted viewers to feel that they were watching a real swing-dance club scene. Our objective was to capture this modern swing-dance look and structure it within narrative vignettes, accompanied by Brian Setzer's soaring guitar playing and the blasting horn section."

The video serves up a visual smorgasbord that features a 17-piece orchestra, an Art Deco backdrop, classic cars, martini-slinging babes and some energetic swing dancing. The rich, jewel-toned look of the clip adds to the ambience. Describing how this look was achieved, Heimbold explains, "Brian is connected with a very classy swing scene and he hand-picked the best dancers. With the help of art director Macpherson Downs, we came up with a theme I like to refer to as 'Gonzo Deco.' We wanted a color palette that would respond vibrantly in telecine, so we chose a gold lamé look accented by leopard prints and gold velvets. We then found a sapphire-blue jacket for Brian that made him really pop out from the background. We were going for the big look made famous by MGM directors such as Stanley Donen, who directed the grand musical *Singin' in the Rain*."

A vacated restaurant lounge at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles proved to be the perfect backdrop and location for the "swing club." Built in 1939, the structure provided a rich, exotic blend of Spanish architecture and Art Deco design. The cinematographer liked the look of this luxuriously textured environment, which offered a variety of backdrops and required minimal set dressing. According to Molina, it was the perfect room in which to create a retro-modern dance club.

However, getting the splashy space on film was no easy task. "With so much offered visually," says Molina, "the challenge became how to shoot our vignettes, playback coverage of the 17-piece orchestra and detailed setups with Brian Setzer — in 35mm format, over just two days without a prelight! In addition, we also had to shoot intricately choreographed swing-dance sequences that would serve as the counterplay to our coverage of Brian."

Molina and Heimbold managed to beat their two-day deadline through a heady combination of technology and a highly efficient, creative crew. "The biggest problem on the video was figuring out how to stage a fictitious club inside a vacant restaurant," comments Molina. "Our solution was to utilize the existing architecture and rethink its purpose to fit our concept."

"We needed angles that would convey the grandeur of a thunderous big-band stage setup," he adds. "The proper setup was important in order to make sense of the club's environment. After much location scouting, I began to see the building in the context of a concert

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Right: A Super Technocrane angles in on Setzer for a close-up. The rig was often used in conjunction with the Frazier lens system for wide-angle detail shots of the performer's fretwork, as well as dancers in action. Bottom, right: A sapphire-blue jacket helped ensure that Setzer would pop out of the warm lighting scheme.

venue. Suddenly, everything made sense. Instead of throwing the band into just any corner of the room, I pushed the idea of extending the room by utilizing the exterior of the structure and created an interesting depth and backdrop for our big-band setup.

"There was a view through an enormous window with a breathtaking perspective of the 40' by 60' by 100' Spanish-roofed archway which connects the restaurant to the train-station lobby," Molina continues. "The effect of this background is a series of front-viewed arches that appear to rainbow over the stage and extend into infinity. This enormous window was flanked by two 60' olive-shaded walls with Cubist wall-light fixtures. The perspective effect reminded me of the Art Deco stage at the Hollywood Bowl, which has the same design. This was the perfect compliment for the Brian Setzer Orchestra, and I threw this idea out to Eric. The whole atmosphere of our club suddenly made a lot more sense."

Implementing Molina's idea required a bit of extra work, but the results were worth the effort. "I knew the idea would dazzle once light was spilled onto the set," he says. "In order to achieve a lighting design, I chose a direction that would accentuate the classic architecture and give the narrative and performance a contemporary edge. I therefore needed a gaffer with that kind of creative balance to achieve the stylistic combination."

Molina recruited Jon Thomas to light his concept. Thomas had previously worked in music video with surrealist directors Dean Karr and Floria Sisgmondi. He was also well-versed in musical dance clips. "Our collaboration led us to create a lighting schematic that complemented the pace of the song and displayed the energy of our narrative," says Molina. "Time was the main obstacle, along with the challenge of lighting extensive dance sequences. There was really had no way to place lighting units without catching them in frame or constantly having to relight. Rigging any overhead gridwork was impossible because of the ceiling's height. But in the end, our limitations created a solution for our lighting design."

Molina had recently worked in New York City and South Beach, Florida. He had observed how those cities drew attention to their Art Deco buildings and hotels by underlighting the structures to create a luminous, jewel-like glow. Molina was thus inspired to light the Union Station restaurant in the same manner. "We successfully hid our units in a narrow row of booths on both sides of the restaurant, in order to focus light upward from low angles. Plus, I was able to give Eric the freedom he needed for the choreography, which involved some intricate aerial and floor moves."

Reflecting upon his own choices, Heimbold offers, "Music videos today have an emphasis on line-dancing, or a very mechanical style of dancing. I knew I wanted some classic style, so I brought in a great choreographer, Travis Payne. We agreed that swing dancing was interesting, but we wanted to take it to another level. We added more of a Bob Fosse style to make it more interesting and sexy. I also gave Travis a sense of a story that involved two sets of dancers competing against each other."

The next challenge for Molina was to heighten the momentum and energy of the dancing. "We obviously wanted a hot color tone to imply heat from the heavy dancing," he says. "The main choice was an overall shade of coral in the architectural lighting and on the dance floor.

"The combination of the risqué swing dancing and the hot, low-angle

lights projecting from the floor gave our 'club' a somewhat hellish look," the cameraman details. "The arched, beamed ceiling was accentuated by low-angled 2K and 5K Fresnels gelled with ¼ CTO. At the corners of the floor, two 5K Fresnels with ½ CTO were spotted up on the twin walls flanking the stage. The 30' by 40' dance floor was given an overall ambience through the use of a Maxi-Brute reflected off a 12' by 12' piece of gold lamé, which replicated the light spilling from the stage.

"To provide a warm key on the dance floor, we used two junior 10Ks gelled with ¼ CTO and opal. We added

some extra intensity by placing two 4K Xenons at both stage left and right; those units acted as follow spots on the dancers to produce hot edge-light and lens flares.

"The big-band stage set was lit in the same low-angle manner to lend the horn section an explosive look," Molina continues. "The entire 17-piece orchestra was surrounded in reflective gold bandstand stage dressing, and then ominously illuminated with two rows of low-angled Tweenies placed behind each and every music stand.

"Brian Setzer's key light was an Aurasoft 4K HMI, which created a reflective metallic look emanating from his hot-blue suit. The Aurasoft was brought back to tungsten temperature with a full CTO plus a ½ CTO. To accent the stage in edge light and provide a 'live concert' vibe, two 4K Xenons were manually panned back and forth. We backlit the entire 30'-long stage with a 7K Zenon aimed into a 4' convex mirror, which was positioned outside at the top of the 60' window and hidden behind a support beam just out of frame. Two 2K Xenons for streaking the air space were also placed outside for manual panning on the 60' window. Finally, six 5Ks were used to highlight the outside arches from low-angle perspectives to create the Hollywood Bowl-like shape behind the stage."

Molina captured all of this activity with a "Panavized" Arriflex 435 camera mounted on a Super Technocrane for versatile and exaggerated camera operation. A Panavision Frazier lens allowed for intimate, extreme close-ups of the both the instruments and orchestra as the camera soared around the club. Heimbold was also able to capture unusual close-ups of dancers' legs and feet as they were swung in the air by their partners, or catapulted from trampolines. This resulted in many spectacular shots that appear to burst out from the frame.

The unique camera configuration also allowed the filmmakers to execute moving shots on the cramped 17' x 6' x 30' stage riser, which was so crammed

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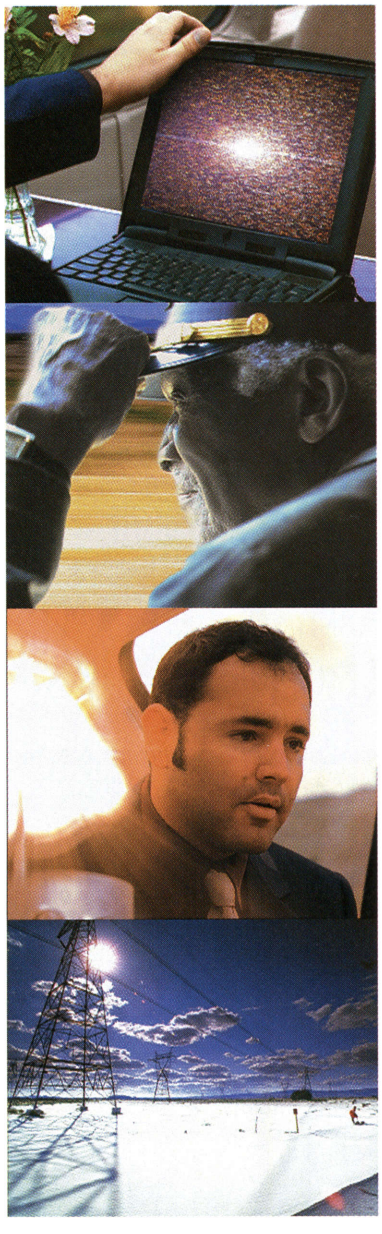


Frames from "Comin' Back," which was shot almost entirely aboard an Amtrak train hurtling across California.

with orchestra members that no space was left for a dolly. By utilizing the Super Technocrane/Frazier lens combination, they were able to glide over rows of the band members and also obtain extreme close-ups of Setzer's frenetic guitar-playing. Heimbold submits, "The system's versatility allowed us to see the whole band and go after super-tight close-ups at the same time."

The director concludes, "Film editor Steve Kraftsow and I cut the clip up a lot in editing in order to keep the energy level high. This song has the biggest buildup of any I've ever heard, so I knew we had to create a really big climax. 'Jump, Jive and Wail' starts out moving like a freight train, turns into the Concorde, and becomes a rocket ship to the moon."

"Jump, Jive and Wail" was recently nominated for Outstanding Choreographic Achievement in a Music Video at the American Choreography Awards (formerly known as the Fosse Awards), which are sponsored by the Society of Stage Directors and the Media Choreographers Council.

Crystal Images
by Stephanie Argy

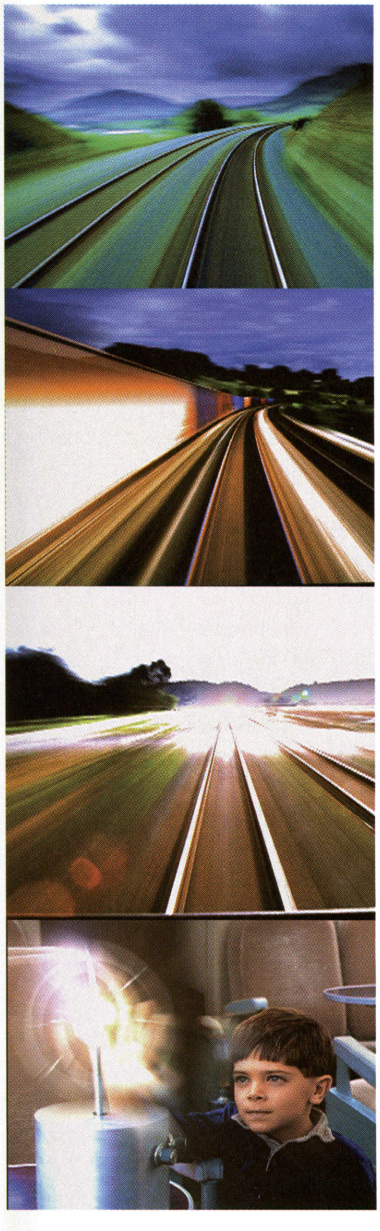
In the recent music video for Crystal Method's "Comin' Back," cinematographer Ramsey Nickell demonstrates a talent not only for shooting, but also for handling limitations with grace and flair. While making the video, which was set largely on a train, Nickell and director Peter Christopherson had to contend with restrictions stemming not only from time and budget, but also from the corporate hierarchy at Amtrak. "It's never a perfect world," says Nickell.

In the video, the band's two members board a train with a mysterious briefcase. "Initially, the idea was to have the guys get on the train, and through the magic of the briefcase, go across the United States," says Nickell. But because the video's budget couldn't accommodate locations spanning the continent, Christopherson modified the premise. In the revised version, the two bandmates travel on the train, while other passengers and people outside the windows lip-sync the song.

The video was shot in three days. On the first day, the crew traveled from Los Angeles to Oakland in an old observation car hooked up behind an Amtrak train. As Nickell photographed the band and other passengers aboard the train, he had to contend with limited power sources for his lighting units. "We had a couple of 1200 Pars — the only things we could run," says Nickell with a laugh. "I've done way too many jobs with two 1200 Pars." To compensate, he says, he tried to work a bounce just to the edge of the frame in order to kick in a bit of extra light.

For both the train interiors and exterior shots, Nickell used Kodak's Vision 250D daylight stock. On the train, he used no filtration, manipulating the look mainly by varying the frame rate. He also shot time-lapse footage from the back of the observation car; in the finished video, this footage plays in reverse, so that the train appears to be hurtling forward.

According to Nickell, Amtrak was relatively cooperative, but the company



refused to modify its timetable to suit the needs of the production. For shots done outside the train, the crew would leap off as the train pulled into a station, scramble to get their shot, then dive back on before the train left.

Director Christopherson, a former cinematographer himself, says he appreciates Nickell's honesty about what can be done in different situations. "He takes the same approach that I do toward getting the job done, which is that you have to try and make things look as good as possible within the limitations," he states. "Ramsey has a really good take on when it's right to spend the extra time." As a result, Nickell has credibility with the director when he does request extra time or takes. "It's really worthwhile to have him say to me, 'Could we please, please do it again?'"

Nickell became a cinematographer almost by accident. In the mid-1980s, he was a nightclub DJ in St. Louis. "I was a pseudo-celebrity," he recalls. "I was completely happy being a total bum." But after losing all of his money in an attempt to finance his own club, he ended up moving to Los Angeles in 1988. He stayed with a friend's brother while awaiting the opening of a club that had promised him a DJ job.

The gig never materialized, so Nickell found work as an office production assistant at The Company, where his friend's brother worked. "They were doing all of the big heavy-metal videos back then. You know, Bon Jovi and Mötley Crüe and all of those bands," says Nickell. He soon moved from the office to the set, eventually becoming an electrician under such accomplished cinematographers as Mark Plummer, Mark Reshovsky and Bill Pope. "I got to work with all of the best people as a cable monkey, dragging stuff around. But I never wanted to be anything more than an electrician," he says. Nevertheless, as the people he worked with rose up the ladder, they pulled Nickell along. Soon enough, without really intending to, he began working as a best boy, then as a gaffer. "Everything was a series of good fortune," he says. Eventually,

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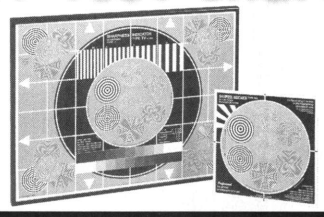

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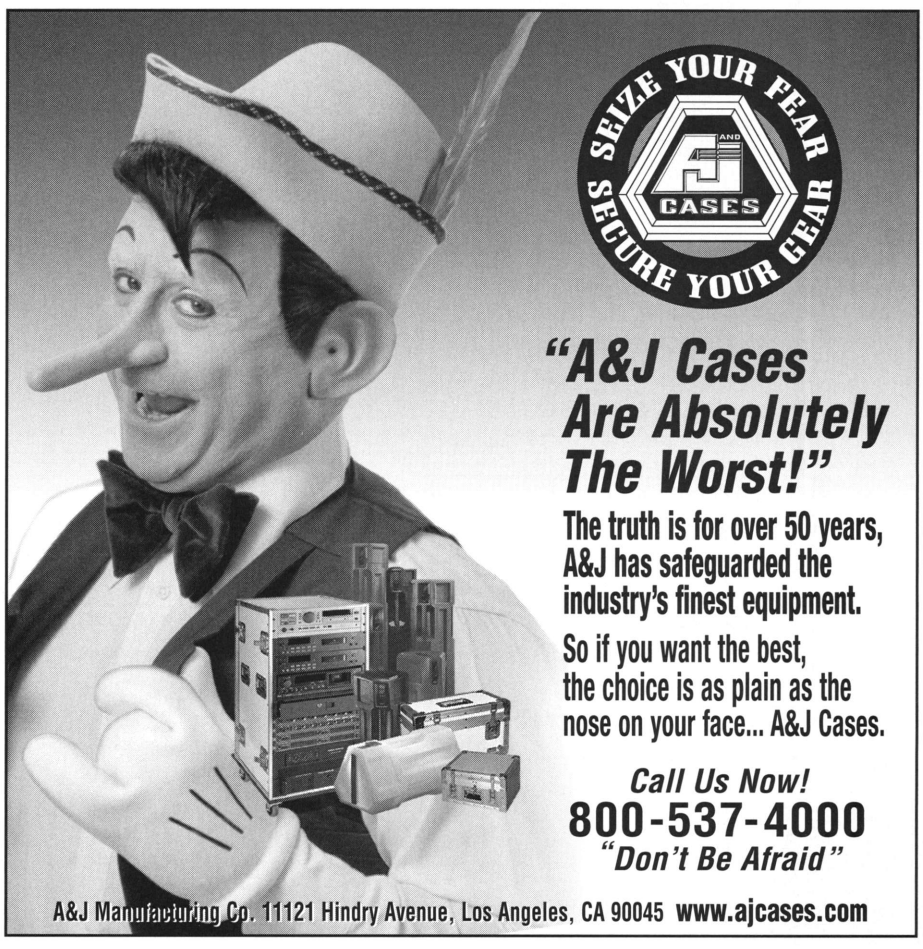

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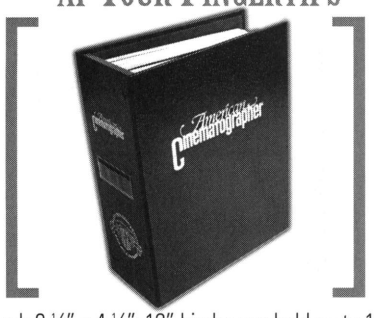

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people began asking him to shoot for them. His first official job as a cinematographer was Dig's "Believe," which went on to become an MTV Buzz Clip.

Nickell claims he owes his career as a cinematographer to the fact that he came up through the electrical ranks, rather than through the traditional cameraman's route. "If I had gone into camerawork, I wouldn't have been as successful," he says. Because he never intended to shoot, he explains, he didn't really watch the cinematographers, focusing instead on his own job. Fortunately, he says, the work he was doing — particularly once he began gaffing — forced him to concentrate on the lighting. Almost by osmosis, he picked up technique.

Nickell says that his first step on any project is to lock in the key light, working in basic broad strokes. "That's one of those expressions that you always hear, but it's true. It all starts with the key light," he says. "When I've mastered the key light, then I worry about the rest."

The cinematographer says that he doesn't have a repertoire of techniques that he regularly exploits. "I walk into the set, and I just see it. It just happens," he says. "I always read about different cinematographers and their tricks, and I think to myself, 'It must be nice to know how you're going to do it.' I never know." Overall, though, he strives for a look that is at once beautiful and natural. "I like the shots to look as if I didn't put a lot of effort into them," says Nickell. "I want things to look as if they just happened. I want to capture that moment where everything looks perfect."

To make up for his relatively minimal camera experience, Nickell employs a strong camera crew, including assistants Dave Perkal and Dan Venti. He has also been helped along by Michael Lai, a marketing executive at Panavision. "Michael kind of adopted me," he says.

On the Crystal Method video, Lai found Nickell a Dynalens to use for the exterior sequences. An optical correction device originally designed for the military during the Vietnam War, the Dynalens consists of two pieces of glass with fluid in between. Small gyro sensors detect movement and instantly prompt the lens to compensate by moving the pieces of glass. This produces a very stable image, free of vibration. Nickell used the device for the shots of lip-syncing people outside the train, which he photographed on the second and third days of the shoot. He and Christopherson wanted the shots to be from the train passengers' point of view, so they shot from the back of a truck, using an 11:1 zoom lens with a doubler and a polarizer. Nickell says that attaching the Dynalens to the front of the zoom eliminated the considerable shake, but also made operating more of a challenge, since the device compensated for pans as well.

Commercials and music videos have given Nickell the opportunity to experiment with different techniques and equipment such as the Dynalens, but in a less extreme way than he might like. "I can't just blow it. I don't have the freedom to take chances," he explains. Unlike someone doing a student film, he points out, he has to answer to the companies he works for. "It puts a lot more pressure on me. I have to take much smaller steps."

Nickell's next step will be into the world of feature films, and he says he must now learn to shoot for the big screen, not just for a video finish. "Everything I have done has been for TV," he explains. "I have the luxury of telecine; it's very hard to mess up." He says he has gained a new respect for cinematographers who came of age when films had less latitude and were harder to work with. "In the old days, it must have been really difficult. It's something I'm just starting to come to terms with," he says.

To ready himself for his first feature — and to make himself a more viable choice for feature production companies — Nickell has been shooting as many short films as he can, in addition to his commercials and music videos. "I want to shoot as much narrative as possible, so I'll be ready," he says. "I want to generate as much projected material as possible. In a sense, I'm going back to school." ■

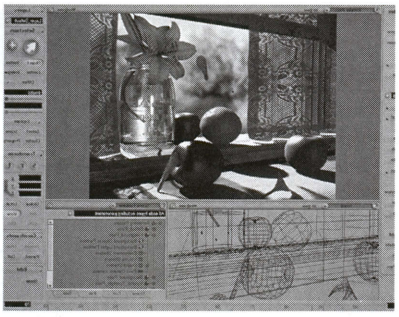
New Products

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson

Sights and Sounds at Siggraph

by David E. Williams

The Special Interest Group Graphics association recently held its 25th anniversary computer graphics conference at the Orlando Convention Center in Orlando Florida. And while some attendees lamented the absence



of any overtly revolutionary new products at Siggraph '98, others explained that the field is maturing and perfecting the current technology plateau — perhaps evidenced by the continued horizontal growth of many software systems. Programs that were once considered the sole domain of editors now offer far-reaching visual effects capabilities, while some visual effects software companies offer ever-more-comprehensive editing systems. The "does-everything" workstation looms on the horizon.

There was also discussion about the prospect of industry-wide consolidation — largely fueled by Avid Technology's purchase of Softimage from Microsoft, and subsequently fanned by Autodesk, Inc.'s planned absorption of Discreet Logic into its new media division, Kinetix. Meanwhile, there were announcements of price reductions on several high-end software systems, perhaps foreshadowing future mergers, cooperative deals, and buyouts.

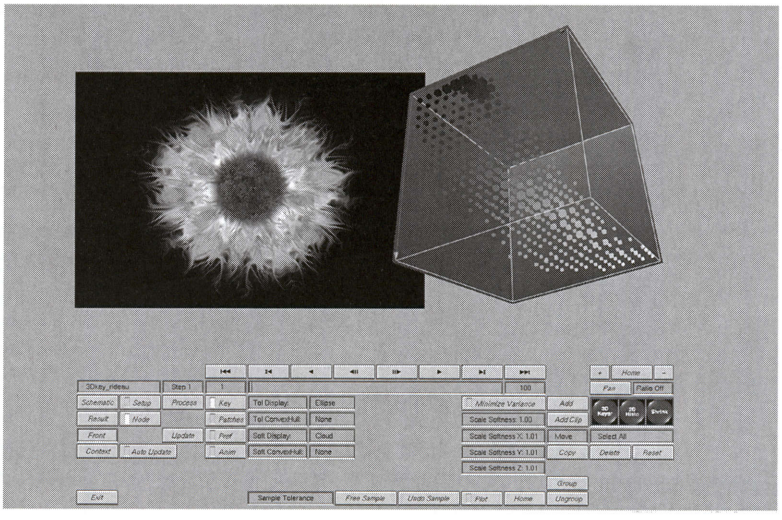
While many young Siggraph attendees were single-mindedly hunting down recruiters from such top visual effects companies as Industrial Light & Magic, Digital Domain, Dream Quest Images, Blue Sky/VIFX, Rhythm & Hues, Pacific Data Images, and Sony Pictures Imageworks (many of which used impressive multimedia displays to tout their latest work), participating hardware and software suppliers announced plenty of new offerings to incur interest from veterans in the field. Some show highlights included:

Avid Technology, Inc. announced the shipping of Media Illusion 5.0, an advanced digital non-linear compositing solution that merges paint, compositing, image manipulation and special effects into one artistic domain. The software's features include Composition Link, a connection to Avid's Media Composer, which allows one to conform Media Composer sequences in the Media Illusion system using a familiar Avid timeline, and automatically re-creating edits in any resolution. Using the system's Process Tree feature, one can experiment with unlimited layers, keys and effects, as well as make changes at any time and preview results without having to revisit each step of the process. The user can even save "trees," so that favorite effects can be copied, saved, swapped out or reused again and again. Also included is advanced keying technology, allowing the user to key off RGB, HSV, chroma, luma or expression. Traveling mattes can be created with Rotosplines, Bezier shapes or free forms. Existing mattes can be edited or combined into super-mattes for perfect keys, every time. The application also has precision tools for color correction and paint.

Media Illusion offers true resolution and format independence. Different resolutions can be combined in a session without resizing or repartitioning disks. Work with film, video, HDTV — whatever format in necessary. The software operates on a range of Silicon Graphics workstations, including the O^2 and Octane, and can run stand-alone or in a multi-user work group environment. Floating-node licenses and background rendering are standard on all Media Illusion systems, providing flexibility to access projects from any workstation.

Avid Technologies, Inc. (800) 949-2843, fax (978) 640-1366, website: www.avid.com

Montreal-based **Discreet Logic** demonstrated Inferno Version 3.0, which offers tools specifically designed for high-end video, high-definition work, and film effects creation. New features include two industry



Far left: The interface for Softimage's new Twister software, which offers full compatability with Softimage/3D version 3.8 scenes and shaders, allowing artists to use next-generation technology to render current-generation scenes. Below: Discreet Logic's Inferno 3.0 user interface, showing the new 3D Keyer with Histogram module. ("Sun" image courtesy of Chris Ryan, senior Inferno artist, VIFX.)

Opposite: A clownish character from *Bingo*, a short film created by Chris Landreth, for which Maya Cloth was utilized to create naturalistic costumes.

firsts, a 3D Keyer and Edge Detection Tracer; as well as 3-D deformations, bi-cubic warping in action, real-time color correction, new text module, and project management. New feature highlights include 3D Keyer, a new visualization tool based on 3-D color space, providing an additional keying module for a choice of two distinguished compositing modes. The interface enables users to visually understand the nature of the key with 3-D graphic tools and pull extremely difficult keys using proprietary algorithms. The 3-D model deformations ability allows free-form bending and animating of 3-D models. Tracer, a new edge detection keyer module now enables artists to pull accurate keys on very difficult backgrounds which previously entailed tedious rotoscoping for mediocre results. For optimum flexibility, the Tracer is fully trackable and animatable. It also features real-time color correction, bi-cubic warping in action, an entirely new text module and project management.

Along with these major advancements in the Inferno toolset, Discreet continues its commitment to improving facility efficiency and workflow via Discreet Logic storage, networking and third-party I/O solutions, as well as enhanced compatibility between Discreet Logic Editing and Effects systems.

Discreet Logic, (514) 393-1616 or (800) 869-3504, fax (514) 393-0110 or 1-800-305-6442,e-mail:product_info@discreet.com, website: www.discreet.com

Imagica Corp. of America announced that its IMAGER3000V digital film scanner now supports Quantel's Domino system. The IMAGER3000V is a precision digital film scanner designed to transfer 35mm motion picture film into resolutions as high as 4,096 x 6,144 (4K x 6K) pixels at 12, 10, or 8 bits per color. It employs a tri-color linear CCD for pick up and a proprietary movement capable of fast film shuttling with the most precise film registration. The IMAGER3000V is designed to handle both 35mm 4-perf and 35mm 8-perf (VistaVision) images. VistaVision scans can be done at resolutions as high as 4,096 x 6,144 pixels. The scanning resolutions are switch-selectable between, 2K, 3K and 4K for film width. The scanner uses a hardware-based color matrix to adjust colorimetry and color reproduction to match sample colorimetry. This provides compatibility with alternative scanning services, if needed. The IMAGER3000V can read a full 4,096 pixels for the width of 35mm Academy, which is 10 percent more resolution than other scanners.

IMAGICA Corporation of America, (310) 306-4180, fax (310) 306-2334, website: www.imagica-la.com.

Softimage announced that it is shipping Softimage/DS version 2.0, its comprehensive nonlinear production (NLP) system for creating, editing and finishing high-end video projects. The program offers real-time effects, as well as enhanced capabilities that provide greater productivity, a richer content creation environment and enhanced project management. New productivity enhancement features include support for two streams of D1 (ITU-R 601) uncompressed video, multiclip drag and drop, match-frame, and support for external MIDI control surfaces to significantly improve the system's overall editing speed. Content creators benefit from enhanced color correction, improved digital video effects (DVE) algorithms and a wider range of compositing tools in version 2.0. Project management is simplified by new archive and restore capabilities, edit decision list (EDL) management features, and expanded file-format support. Running on the Microsoft Windows NT operating system, Softimage/DS integrates the functionality of a full postproduction company into a single environment at a fraction of the cost.

Softimage also announced that its next-generation rendering system, code-named Twister, is entering the beta test cycle with delivery to customers scheduled for the fourth quarter of 1998. Twister is the first module of the soon-to-be-released 3-D animation platform, code-named Sumatra, which provides a revolutionary new approach to character animation and introduces the concept of nonlinear animation (NLA).

Twister is intended for use in combination with Softimage/3D version 3.8, now shipping to customers, which allows users to perform interactive rendering in a next-generation environment. Combining the power of mental ray version 2.0 with the architecture and interface of the Sumatra next-generation 3-D platform, Twister fits neatly into the Softimage/3D 3.8 workflow with an interactive tool set that complements and extends the functionality of the current-generation software. Twister takes advantage of the forthcoming Sumatra user interface, which provides much smoother workflow and data access while maintaining the familiar and intuitive Softimage user environment that has become integral to much of the animation industry.

Twister allows users to render directly in the 3-D view, with instant feedback that shows how parameter changes affect the final rendering quality. Whereas rendering was once a time-intensive process, it will now become essentially another viewing mode. This interactive view evaluates the entire scene-rendering tree, and it allows users to view and modify all rendering effects, including motion-blur and shadow-mapping. Twister also integrates many production conveniences, such as scene-level renderpass definition, allowing users to predetermine all of the computer graphics passes to be used in a production.

Twister is based on Mental Ray version 2.0, a next-generation renderer that will set new standards for quality and workflow. In addition to significantly improved performance, Mental Ray 2.0 offers a host of new features, such as depth-map shadows, scanline motion-blur and polygon displacement, as well as support for caustics, which allows the renderer to accurately calculate and render the light diffusion around a scene.

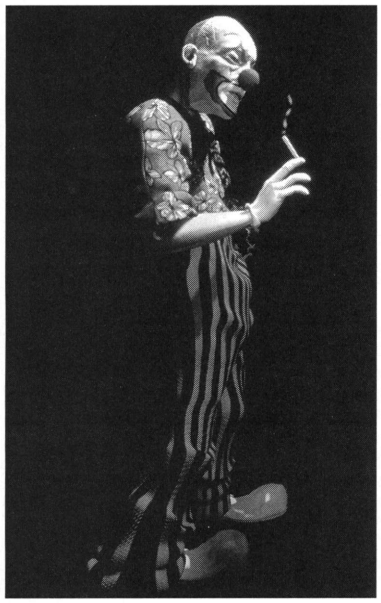
Twister allows users to distribute jobs quickly and easily across multiple CPUs, both locally and remotely, using new techniques such as distributed tesselation and local texture caching for significantly improved distributed performance.

Softimage, (514) 845-1636, fax (514) 845-5678, website: www.softimage.com

Alias/Wavefront announced Maya Cloth, a new software solution to one of the toughest challenges in CG character animation — creating authentic-looking cloth that drapes and flows naturally. As a fully integrated advanced module of Maya, Alias/Wavefront's 3-D animation and special effects software, artists can use Maya Cloth to dress any 3-D figure, animate it, and apply dynamic effects to both the character and the clothing within one cohesive package. For years, animators have struggled to find a computer-generated representation of clothing that looks and behaves realistically. Maya Cloth provides a clothing simulation within a new paradigm that brings the real-world

experience of tailors to the digital world.

Maya Cloth was designed from the outset to handle complex garments such as shirts, waisted jackets, loose T-shirts, raincoats, and pants with cloth that moves and behaves in precisely the right way and is easy to set up. Further enhancing the realism is the cloth solver in Maya Cloth, which enables animators to create complex garments such



as skirts, jackets with lapels, or pocketed jeans with great time savings and no sacrifice of detail or quality.

Artists can model clothing by sketching and stitching together flat patterns using conventional tailoring methods. This results in a more realistic cloth behavior, and is very fast and intuitive to set up.

A wide range of material types previously unavailable can be simulated with Maya Cloth. Garments can be made of multiple materials, as in the case of a canvas jacket with leather sleeves. In addition to clothing for characters, many other types of cloth animation are possible, including sheets, bedding, drapery, curtains, and fabric goods of all kinds.

Artists can leverage the power of the Maya architecture in cloth simulation. For example, the animator can use turbulence and air fields to create strong wind effects on a coat, while rain particles splash off the surface of the garment.

Alias/Wavefront, (416) 362-9181, fax (416) 369-6140, website: www.aw.sgi.com.

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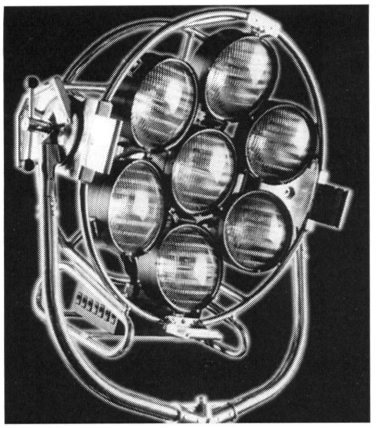
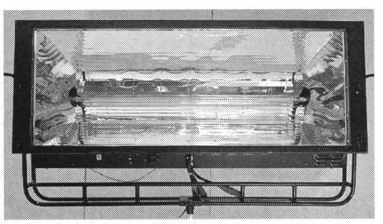


Arriflex Acquires Ruby 7

Arriflex announces worldwide distribution of the Ruby 7, a multi-Par tungsten fixture from Luminaria Ltd. With its Tandem Beam Focus technology, the fixture consists of seven Par-64 lamps mounted on a hub of six outer and one center lamp. The outer six lamps can pivot in tandem around the center and, at the same time, can be individually rotated 360 degrees for independent beam control. All seven beams can be focused on any point from 16 inches across to several hundred feet away. In a retracted setting, the beams crisscross, achieving a flood pattern within a short distance. The lamps can also be dimmed for even more lighting control. A lightweight, rugged lighting instrument which operates in any position, the Ruby 7 accepts 29" accessories such as scrims, barndoors and the Chimera Senior Light Bank.

Arriflex, (818) 841-7070, fax (818) 848-4028.



Here Comes the Sun

Lightning Strikes introduces the 50K SoftSun and the Enhanced Spectrum Long Arc (ESL) Lamp. The SoftSun provides soft output directly from the source; also featured is the new 50K ESL Lamp, which resembles a fluorescent tube yet provides 5600°K daylight color temperature. The SoftSun is especially useful for work with critical color requirements; it achieves a remarkable level of color rendering and light control. Free from superfluous color spikes, the color stays clean and accurate regardless of lamp age. Plus, the color remains constant even during dimming.

The ESL source provides a smooth and even color spectrum and provides good emulation of natural sunlight. In addition, the ESL Lamp can be dimmed from 10 percent to a 1 percent output with no significant shift in color temperature (less than a 200°K change throughout most of the range). Lamps are available from 500 to 50,000 watts.

Lightning Strikes, (323) 461-6361, fax (323) 461-3067, website: www.lightningstrikes.com.

Lens Accessories

Century Precision Optics introduces its newest family of Value Series lens accessories, which are engineered specifically for use on the Canon XL1 compact digital camcorder. These add-ons for the XL1 interface directly with the front of the lens, locking and unlocking with a simple twist.

The Value Series .6x Wide-Angle Adapter mounts to the front of the XL1's standard 16:1 zoom lens, increasing coverage by 40 percent when zooming is not needed. The .6x provides a significantly wider angle of view with minimal distortion. The .8x Wide-Angle Converter is designed for shoots requiring both a wider angle of view and full zooming capabilities. Adding the .8x Wide-Angle Converter to the lens front yields 20 percent more coverage when set to wide angle, telephoto or anywhere in between.

The Fisheye Adapter clamps to the front of the XL1's zoom to provide the widest possible angle of view and a high degree of barrel distortion. It exaggerates depth, pulling nearby objects closer and causing distant objects to recede into the background.

Mounted on the Canon XL1 lens, the 1.6x Value Series Tele-Converter provides greater telephoto reach. Usage of the Tele-Converter instantly shifts the focal length range in the telephoto direction.

Available in +2.0 and +3.5 magnifications, Value Series Achromatic Diopters (also called "macro zoom attachments") can be used in situations that require tight focus on a small object in tabletop, miniature, or flat-field videography. Adding them to the zoom with a lens front provides greater close-up range and magnification while maintaining zoom capabilities, without compromising image quality. All Value Series accessories of the Canon XL1 feature precision construction, multi-coated glass elements and light aluminum alloy housings.

Century Precision Optics, (818) 766-3715, fax (818) 505-9865, website: www.centuryoptics.com.

Throwing Shade

ProSource announces the addition of several new accessories for the SHADE FX matte box system. The Wide-Angle Kit was designed for the Fujinon 10 x 4.8 lens and provides every component needed for using a single, fixed 4" x 4" filter or fully rotating 4.5" polarizing filter. Filter frames and cases are supplied with the kit. The Side Flag Kit consists of two quick release side flags and a wide French flag. Mounting hardware is permanently attached to the carbon fiber

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Panoramic Accessories

Bogen Photo Corp. now presents a new series of accessories for panoramic picture taking — including digital images for web sites. The Manfrotto Leveling Base helps keep the rotation plane perfectly level, and

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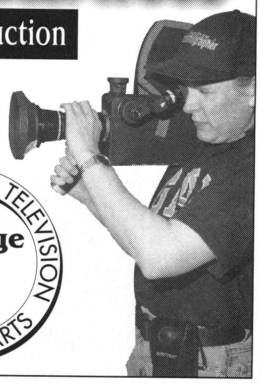

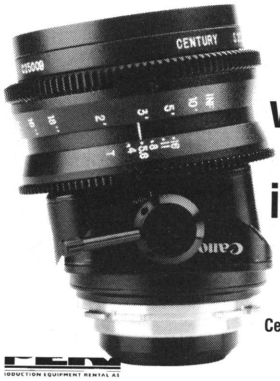

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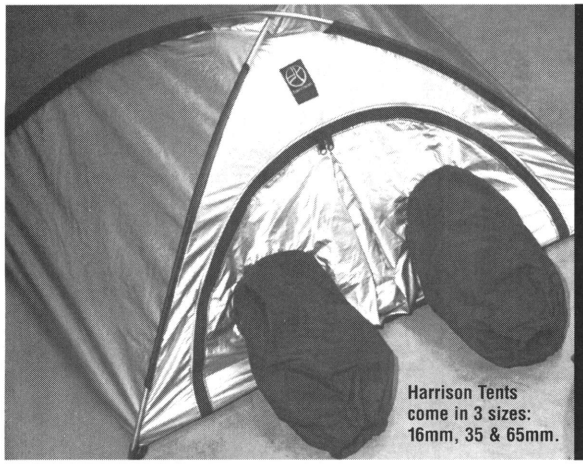

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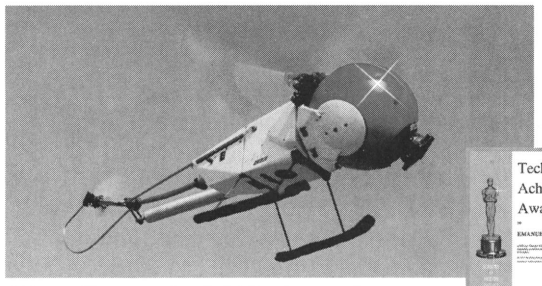

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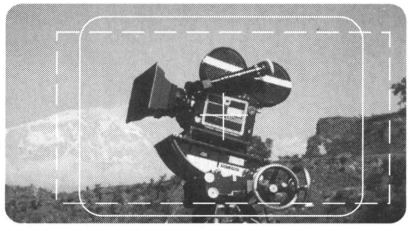

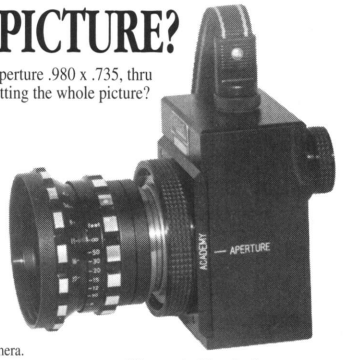

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The unit can be controlled remotely via RS-485 serial communications through a 9-pin D-sub connector. RS-485 communications improves performance when the lens is remotely operated over a long cable run, and resists interference from sources such as fluorescent lights, which can sometimes corrupt communications over RS-232 communication links.

Digital control also allows routine diagnostics to be performed quickly on the Ah70x via Fujinon's FIND system — this evaluates the operation of major lens functions and informs the user about subsystems that are not functioning properly. It also allows the performance history of the lens to be maintained. In addition, the FIND system allows a Fujinon service center to diagnose problems over the telephone while monitoring system performance.

Although the Ah70x performs all of its functions by digital control, its zoom-and-focus demand is interchangeable with existing analog-controlled lenses. The zoom-and-focus demands from these lenses can also be used on the Ah70x, although digital features will not be operational. This backward and forward compatibility is essential to accommodate Fujinon's large installed base of lenses. Other features include: f-number limit with which a circuit can be enabled that restricts the zoom range of the lens to the point at which f-stop ramping begins; and a 2x extender which doubles the 9.5 to 665mm zoom range of the Ah70x to 19 to 1330 mm.

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Points East

Memories of the Mob

by Eric Rudolph

HBO's new dramatic series *The Sopranos*, which begins its weekly run in early January, is the creation of David Chase, executive producer of the final two seasons of the late, lamented *Northern Exposure*. Chase was also one of the executive producers of the highly acclaimed series *I'll Fly Away*.

The Sopranos shows what happens when the Mafia meets the stress-filled Nineties. Chase has melded the whimsical navel-gazing of *Northern Exposure* with the brutal mob documentary quality of *GoodFellas*, along with just a dash of *Get Shorty*'s self-referential Hollywood obsession. This unlikely brew, which Chase calls "a drama with comedy," looks like an offbeat winner and has a 13-week commitment from HBO.

The show revolves around North Jersey garbage-hauling mobster Anthony Soprano (James Gandolfini), whose old-style Mafia world is colliding with that of young mob wannabes who shirk their duties, complain that they don't get enough positive reinforcement, and threaten to quit and sell their life stories to Hollywood. When the departure of a cherished family of ducks from the pool at his lush North Jersey subdivision mansion foreshadows the unraveling of his crime family, Soprano is overwhelmed to the point of repeated physical collapse.

Like any good tough guy, Soprano takes action, but not in the way one would expect. He consults a smoky-voiced and very attractive Italian psychiatrist (*GoodFellas*' Lorraine Bracco) who prescribes a lot of talk therapy and Prozac. Relief from depression and the recitation of amusing Mafia anecdotes is clearly at hand.

In keeping with this different take on mob life, Chase and director of photography Alik Sakharov (*Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life, Midnight Edition,* and *Love! Valor! Compassion!)* devised a distinctive look for *The Sopranos*. During a recent lunch break at Silvercup Studios in Queens, near the 59th Street Bridge to Manhattan, Sakharov explained that he and Chase talked extensively about the look of the series while screening films shot by Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC.

However, if any great cinematographer's shadow looms over *The Sopranos*, it is that of Gordon Willis, ASC, the expert eye behind the *Godfather* trilogy. "*The Godfather* is a benchmark for all filmmakers," Chase says respectfully. "I love Gordon Willis's work, especially on those films — so much that it is hard to express it."

Sakharov is equally enthusiastic, calling Willis's work "naturalistic and very alive. It is not about 'Lets come in and destroy everything this location gave us and re-create it for the sake of glamour.'" In trying to emulate the master's naturalistic approach, Sakharov devised a simple and unusual lighting technique for *The Sopranos,* producing a look he feels is close in spirit and style to Willis's work in *The Godfather* series and other films.

Willis was not Sakharov's only influence, however. "Russian cinematographers are very anti-glamour," he says. "Their work is very much about creating texture and a mood. The use of household lighting in Russian films has a lot to do with that."

These inspirations and the familiarity of the real-life settings described in the scripts for *The Sopranos* prompted Sakharov to pre-light a great deal of the massive interior set of the Soprano home with "bat-strips" consisting of 16 100-watt household bulbs attached to 4'-long

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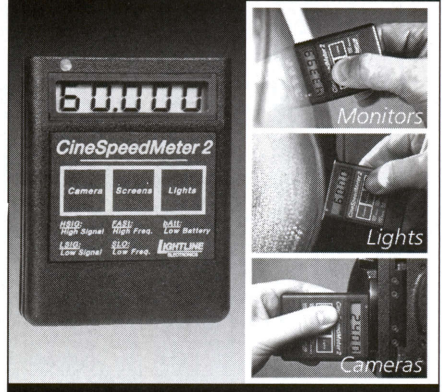

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strips of wood. The units are housed in simple wooden boxes fitted with diffusion material and mounted to the stage ceiling. Many have black "bottom shelves" rigged to a small block and tackle, "so we can control the spillage and keep it off the walls," Sakharov explains. These lights, with their warm, uncorrected bulbs, produced the *Godfather*-style brown-yellow tones the cinematographer was after. "The bulbs are only a few millimeters apart," he explains, "and they create an even light with very faint multiple shadows."

In addition to giving the cinematographer the lighting he sought, the bat-strips also serve a practical purpose. "They allow us to work with lightning speed," he notes. Using little more than the built-in strip-lights, the crew "regularly lights complex scenes in a half-hour or less."

If he does not want even the faint multiple shadows the strips produce, Sakharov simply uses stand-mounted bat-strips and turns them at a sharp angle to the actors. "The strip-lights are very clean, like a softbox, when used this way," he emphasizes. Full-length figure shots of actors are often lit with bat-strips positioned vertically.

Those lights and banks of pre-hung Chinese lanterns fitted with Photofloods (a group of 16 hangs over the Soprano home's large foyer, and one is positioned above the dining room chandelier) provide most of the lighting for the house interiors. "We had a good preproduction budget, and my gaffer, Kevin Janicelli, did a great job rigging the main standing sets, so we rarely have to set any additional lights," Sakharov explains. Lights on stands are, indeed, used sparingly. "We wanted to keep the set clean and open so the actors and the camera could move," he says. "To control our fill ratio, we use dimmers on the various strip lights."

Special fixtures are brought in when needed for certain situations. For example, Sakharov used a 1,000-watt softlight — fitted with a snoot, aimed through double diffusion and controlled with flags — to light a close-up of Soprano's wife, Carmella (Edie Falco), so it would match a master in which she was seated on a couch. The master scene was dimly lit with shaded bat-strips above — primarily providing a rim light — and table lamps with ordinary 100-watt household bulbs at each end of the couch. Sakharov also dimmed the 1K softlight used to light the close-up in order to match the color temperature of the household bulbs.

Another unusual aspect of *The Sopranos'* visual style is the use of deep, inky half-shadows in close-ups. "We did some camera tests, and we really liked the deep, dark half-shadows," explains Chase. "It another echo of Gordon Willis's work, but our shadows are not quite as deep as his!"

Sakharov photographs *The Sopranos* with a Panavision Platinum camera and a wide array of Primo prime and zoom lenses. "I love zooming when it's done skillfully," the cinematographer enthuses. "Zooms are often used very well by Russian cinematographers."

Sakharov is shooting the entire series exclusively on Kodak's 5279 Vision 500T stock. "We are constantly using ND filters outside," Sakharov admits. To keep the brownish tones consistent with those of the interiors, tobacco #1 and 2 filters are used on exteriors, sometimes in combination with a polarizer, which he feels lends scenes "a feature-film richness." Interiors, where the warm household lamps predominate, are filmed without filters.

In addition to the show's many homages to the Willis lighting style, the pilot actually includes a direct reference to the master cameraman. In an early scene, Carmella Soprano and her friend, priest and spiritual advisor, Father Phil (Michael Santoro), are watching movies on laserdisc. "Tony says the camerawork on the *Godfather II* [disc] looks as good as it does in the movie theater," Carmella notes. In response to her comment, Father Phil exclaims, "Gordon Willis!"

"I put that in to amuse Alik," Chase notes with a grin. ■

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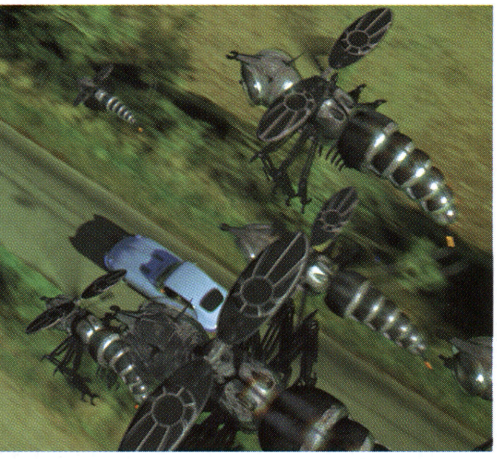
Global Village

Unusual Assailants in *The Avengers*

by Nick Radlo



A swarm of mechanical bees home-in on Mrs. Peel's Jaguar. The insects were created with a combination of animatronics and CG solutions.

Set in the swinging 1960s, *The Avengers* was an archetypal English TV series which presented the ongoing adventures of a supercool crime-fighting duo: the impeccably attired John Steed (memorably portrayed by Patrick Macnee) and the impossibly seductive Mrs. Emma Peel (embodied by Diana Rigg). When it was decided to make a big-budget feature that would revive the exploits of Steed and his slinky companion (Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman), the arch-villain became the English weather itself.

Since the megalomaniac in the film — Sir August De Wynter, played by Sean Connery — uses his control of the weather to pursue evil ends, there was a glorious opportunity for the visual effects team to produce the worst weather you could ever imagine hitting Britain. Months of research was done to determine how best to digitally produce that kind of weather — and the skies and clouds it would require — but the film is also notable for drawing on different painting techniques and for mixing traditional and digital effects methods.

"The basis for the turbulent feel of the skies we used were the paintings of John Martin," says Nick Davis, visual effects supervisor on the film. Martin was a 19th-century painter of mainly religious subjects, famous for his pictures of doom-laden Bible scenes — visions of Armageddon and the like — in which it was common to have the skies rent asunder by prophets.

To preserve the otherworldly, surreal feel of the original series, the paintings of surrealist René Magritte were also used as a reference. "We'd all gone in with the intention of making the film very stylized, creating a super-saturated world that would be reflected in the color schemes used in the production design and in the overall look," says Davis.

The Avengers employs a good number of digital sky replacements, but many of the spectacular weather disasters are done with a judicious mixture of detailed model work, physical effects and digital compositing. Davis explains, "We were integrating the real and the super-real; there was a close balance between the two, and we did a lot of research into how to make those ideas work together."

Companies like Computer Film Company experimented with the skies and formulated ways to generate 3-D cloud sequences. "We used multiple levels of clouds, and it was important to get the shapes and overall feel right," Davis offers.

The clouds had to be convincing, yet also have a hyper-realistic and stylized look. CFC sought to develop an approach that would be sufficiently controllable yet retain the chaotic and organic nature of clouds and weather systems. "It involved a lot of playing around with different algorithms, simulating smoke and clouds," says CFC lead CG designer Dan Glass. "In the end, we chose a 2½-D rather than a 3-D approach to the cloud simulation. Normally, you'd approach cloud simulation with particle systems and enormous computing power. But the tests take hours or days before you get the feedback you want, so we relied more on texture and shading to give a sense of shape and form — a much faster technique that allowed us to try more things. We cut in edges and added many layers, and succeeded in creating a 3-D look."

CFC also whipped up some of the storms that rage over London in the picture. The firm used a combination of Side Effects' Houdini software (for the basic modeling and animation) and Renderman (for the more detailed procedural modeling and shading). Built up as multiple layers of cloud elements, some shots required as many as 80 CG passes in the final composite.

Cinesite Europe in London also helped to create bad weather for *The Avengers,* among a grand total of 150 shots. "De Wynter harnesses the weather as a tool of aggression, and a tornado sequence we did represents the worst he could do," says Cinesite Europe senior digital effects producer Alex Bicknell. "It involved creating an electrical storm above London and a tornado heading west."

The sequence also features a water spout spinning down the Thames and crashing into Lambeth Bridge, below the Houses of Parliament. The tornado was created using Alias Wavefront's Maya software for the basic model, which was then clothed with many layers of particles and given an anti-clockwise spiral, as well as lots of spray

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at the bottom. "There were seven layers, and we added 2-D lighting at the composite stage to give [the twister] depth and form," Bicknell explains. "When the tornado hit Lambeth Bridge and smashed it in full frame, we replaced part of the bridge with a CG section. Using the dynamics in Maya allowed us to interact with the CG model of the bridge; we could rip off the lamps and railings without having to hand-animate the work. We could also add the right weight and direction to the debris as it was whipped up by the tornado."

Other shots that Cinesite made added to the film's surrealistic atmosphere. Notes Bicknell, "The director of photography, Roger Pratt [BSC], had created a very soft look for the film, giving it a dreamlike quality representing 'Avengers-Land,' so all of the exterior scenes had this wonderful soft feel. We had to make sure the CG elements weren't too harsh and had the same soft glow, so we wrote a custom shader to tie in with that look. Roger contributed a lot to the look of the movie with his choice of lighting and the way it's resolved on film."

Detailed miniatures were used to achieve some spectacular setpiece scenes in London. "It does seem as though there's a resurgence in the use of model work, with people going back to using miniatures for reactive stuff, such as explosions," says Magic Models' Jose Granell, who served as model-unit director on *The Avengers*. "That's still the best way of doing it."

Sister company Magic Camera Company digitally composited the model sequences. The most detailed model was of Trafalgar Square, which Magic Models built to 1/10 scale, with a 360-degree panoramic view of everything in the square. The model was 70 feet across each way, and accurate right down to the finest details. "It was absolutely massive. We photographed the Square and matched everything in very fine detail — every single statue and lamppost," says Granell, who was also able to take the buildings built for the model and redress and reconfigure them to represent other parts of London, as in a spectacular bus-crash scene.

The new J and K stages at Shepperton housed the Trafalgar Square model. Granell notes, "We were able to use both as one entire stage, since the dividing wall between them hadn't been built yet."

In the Trafalgar Square sequence, a hot-air balloon floats over London by way of a lot of in-camera effects. "We had a 1/10-scale gondola, with radio-controlled figures representing the two actors, to make head and leg movement possible and to give life to them," says Granell.

One job which required an absolutely seamless combination of physical and digital effects was a sequence in which Peel attempts to use her E-Type Jaguar to outrace a squadron of mechanical bees equipped with guns and missiles, which bear down on her like World War II fighter planes. "There were swarms of them," says Joss Williams, special effects supervisor at Darkside Effects, which did most of the physical effects on the movie. "We made all of the bees that came in contact with the car, as well as the ones that blew up. We also made a radio-controlled bee, and configured the action of the guns with a propane and oxygen mix."

The aerial bees were made digitally by Cinesite. According to Davis, "about 40 of the bee shots were full-on 3-D, backed by aerial photography plates, which involved some very complicated 3-D moves and fantastic animation."

"It was one of the biggest sequences we did," says Bicknell. The swarm's attack on the car also included a lot of practical explosions and bullet hits. One sequence in a tunnel features 30 bees, 10 of which explode against the walls. Bicknell notes, "We planned to do a lot of the shots of bees in the camera, using model bees, but the choreography was changed in post, and the swarming of the bees was altered. In the end, we did most of them in CG, with several lighting changes as the sequence continued." ■

Books in Review

by George Turner

The Five C's of Cinematography: Moving Picture Filming Techniques
by Joseph V. Mascelli, ASC
Silman-James Press, 251 pps., paper, $29.95

When Joe Mascelli's *The Five C's* was first published in 1965, a ripple of surprise was discernible throughout the motion picture industry. Here was an up-to-date professional director of photography (and also the editor of the first two editions of the *American Cinematographer Manual)* spilling the beans in detail about how good cinematography is achieved and how to visualize a narrative in motion picture terms. *American Cinematographer* called it "one of the three most important books on cinematic technique ever published," while the *New York Times* opined that it was "the equivalent of a complete course in filmmaking." When *The Five C's* went out of print, the demand for it was tumultuous. For three decades, the ASC (which did not publish the book) received many calls from people requesting it.

Fortunately, Mascelli's magnum opus is back in a handsome paperback reprint, with its text unchanged and its hundreds of photos intact. The introduction by the great Arthur Miller, ASC still casts its spell.

The five C's, incidentally, are Camera Angles, Continuity, Cutting, Close-ups and Composition. Just as Beethoven built his most popular symphony upon a four-note figure, Mascelli developed a mass of information from his five basic tenets. In a prologue, almost as an afterthought, he mentioned one more "C": Cheating, which in this instance is "the art of rearranging people, objects or actions, during filming or editing, so that the screen effect is enhanced." The author did not add a chapter on this topic because, as he notes, it can't be taught by the printed word, but only through experience.

Mascelli was a working cinematographer, not one of those few who becomes a household name, but a man of broad experience in his field. He worked on this book for years, even hiring actors to pose for many of the illustrations. In the course of the project, he did the seemingly impossible by translating the intangibles of motion picture technique into clear, understandable prose. *The Five C's* should be in the library of anyone interested in filmmaking.

The Films of Lon Chaney
by Michael H. Blake
Vestal Press, 218 pps., hardback, $35

Seven years ago, Hollywood makeup artist Michael Blake published *Lon Chaney: The Man Behind a Thousand Faces,* at that time the most comprehensive biography of the great character actor. In the two subsequent years, however, he found a wealth of new Chaney information, which he included in *A Thousand Faces: Lon Chaney's Unique Artistry in Motion Pictures.* Now, in this third volume, Blake offers the most complete filmography of Chaney yet, covering no less than 158 film appearances, from *Poor Jake's Demise* (1913) to *The Unholy Three* (1930). Casts, credits, synopses, current reviews and comments are provided in each instance. Also enumerated are Chaney's unrealized projects and appearances in newsreels, documentaries, and the actor's own 16mm home movies.

Today, the Chaney is usually thought of as a specialist in horror films because of the popularity of *The Hunch-*

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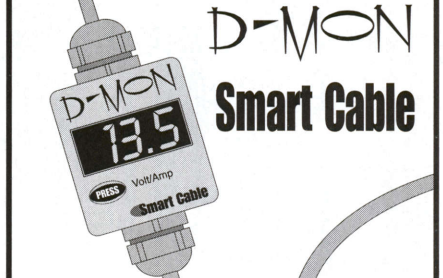

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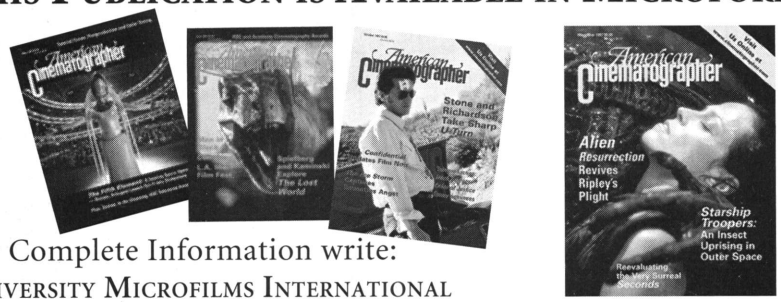

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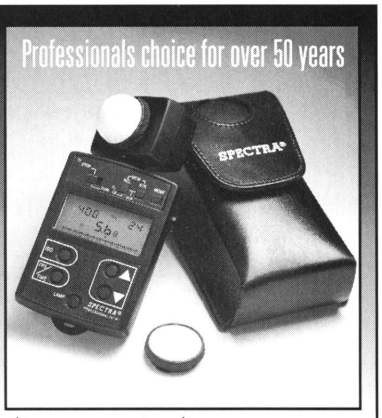

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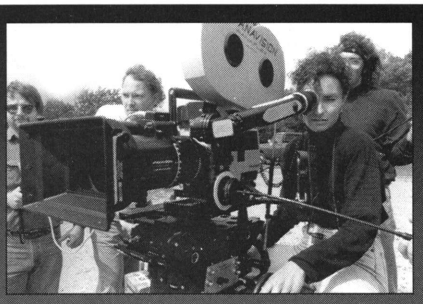

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back of Notre Dame, Phantom of the Opera and other films in which he utilized his artistry with makeup to create horrific villains. However, a study of his filmography affirms that the vast majority of his projects were big-city dramas, rural melodramas, Westerns, and comedies in which he played an assortment of heroes, colorful characters and villains.

This account of Chaney's career is highly informative and laced with good photos — essential reading for any fan.

You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet
by Andrew Sarris
Oxford University Press, hardback, 574 pps., $35

Film critic Andrew Sarris gained fame over 30 years ago when he brought the "auteur theory" from France to America. The idea that a movie is the work of one person, the director, caught on like wildfire among dilettantes, but produced an opposite reaction among working professionals, including many of the less pretentious directors. At first glance, Sarris doesn't seem to have altered his opinion much in this impressive new opus ("Of course, Max Ophuls' *Caught*... and Douglas Sirk's *Sleep My Love*... possess auteurist virtues which more than compensate for their genre vices..."). On the other hand, the author lavishes considerable praise on other production personnel, particularly writers, cinematographers and composers.

Anyone who champions such "unfashionable" pictures as *When Strangers Marry, The House by the River, Rendezvous With Annie, Gun Crazy* or Val Lewton's low-budget masterworks has a real devotion and a solid grasp of what good movies are made of. Sarris leaps to the defense of the critically despised Westerns, using well-chosen examples to illustrate that "the Western is more varied in its narrative permutations and thematic variations than casual impressions of the genre would suggest."

The book's scope is restricted to American talking pictures of the period 1927-1949, but a historical perspective is achieved in the course of the author's cinematic odyssey. ■

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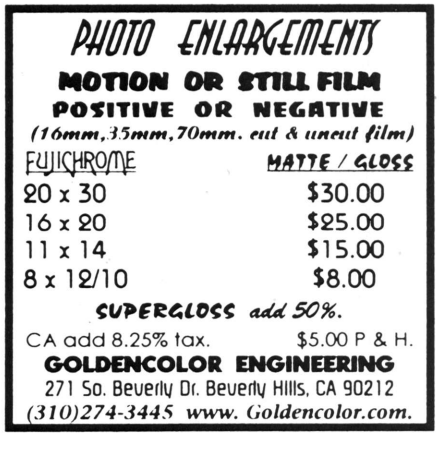

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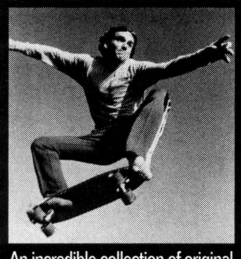

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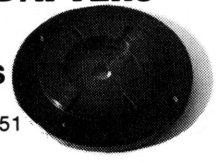

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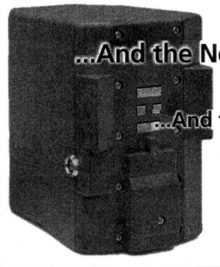

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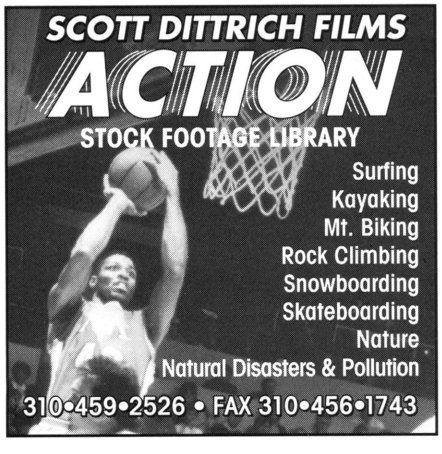

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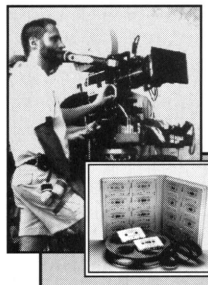

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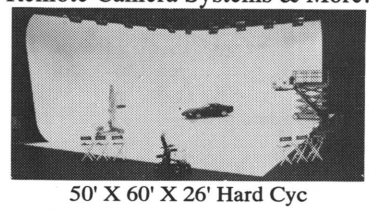

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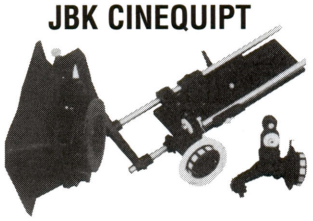

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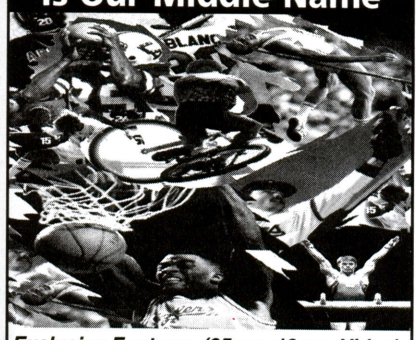

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From the Clubhouse

Doctor Robert

On June 23, ASC member Robert Primes was bestowed with an honorary doctorate degree from Columbia College, Hollywood. Here is an excerpt from his acceptance speech: "Film attracts intelligent and caring people who want to use its great persuasive power to move, educate and inspire. The people who actually succeed in doing this — in making a *Good Will Hunting* or a *Schindler's List* — affect tens or even hundreds of millions of people. They stimulate them to think… they bring beauty into their lives… they make them kinder and wiser, less fearful and more sensitive and empathetic to the human condition…

"But the truth is that there aren't many [films like] *Schindler's List*. There are many well-made movies, but relatively few that really make a difference. So… given an industry in which most of us feel lucky to be working at all, much less working on something meaningful, how can we maintain our idealism and our innocence?

"To be perfectly frank, I don't know. But a start might be to always remember why you went into this great industry and to be aware of what your values are now, because life sometimes tends to disillusion and erode our precious optimism."

New ASC Active and Associate Members

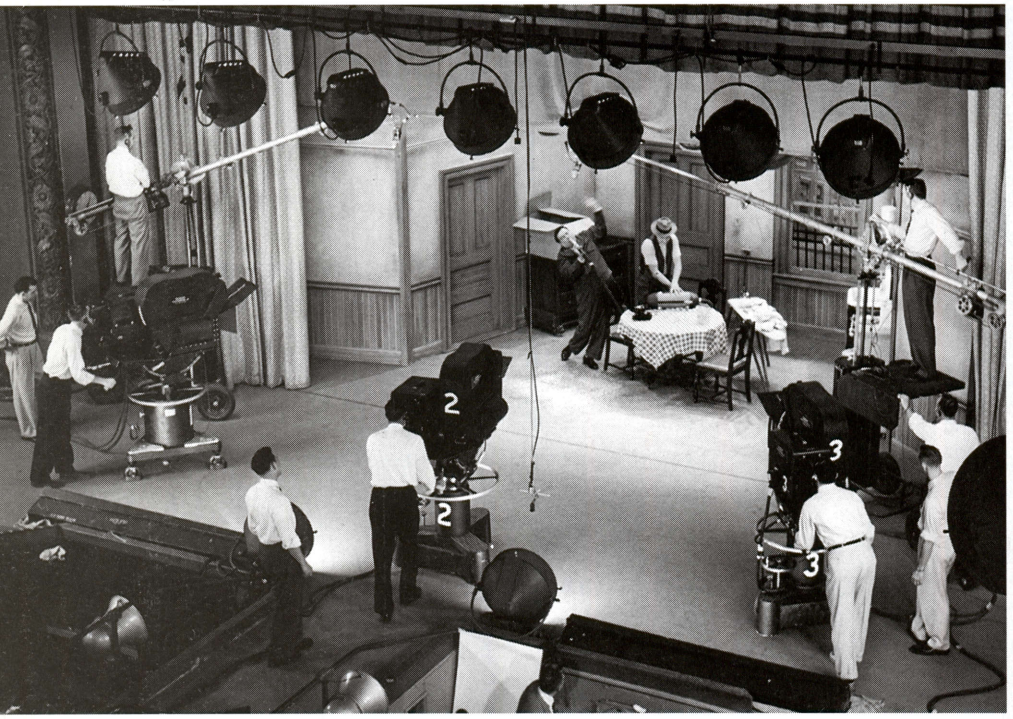
The ASC recently welcomed **Darius Khondji,** a member of the Association of French Cinematographers, to its ranks of active members. Born in Tehran, Iran, and raised in Paris, France, Khondji began shooting Super 8 movies during his teenage years. He received formal cinematic education at the International Center of Photography and New York University Film School. After graduating, Khondji returned to France and worked as an assistant to cameraman Bruno Nuytten, AFC *(Brubaker)*. Khondji began his own career photographing commercials for such high-end clients as Calvin Klein, Armani and Lancome. His first feature as a cinematographer was F.J. Ossang's black-and-white underground cult film *Treasure of Bitch Island*. The cameraman's other credits include *Delicatessen*, *The City of Lost Children*, *Seven* (ASC Award nomination), *Stealing Beauty* and *Evita* (Academy and ASC Award nominations). Recently, Khondji contributed to Neil Jordan's *In Dreams* and Roman Polanski's *The Ninth Gate*.

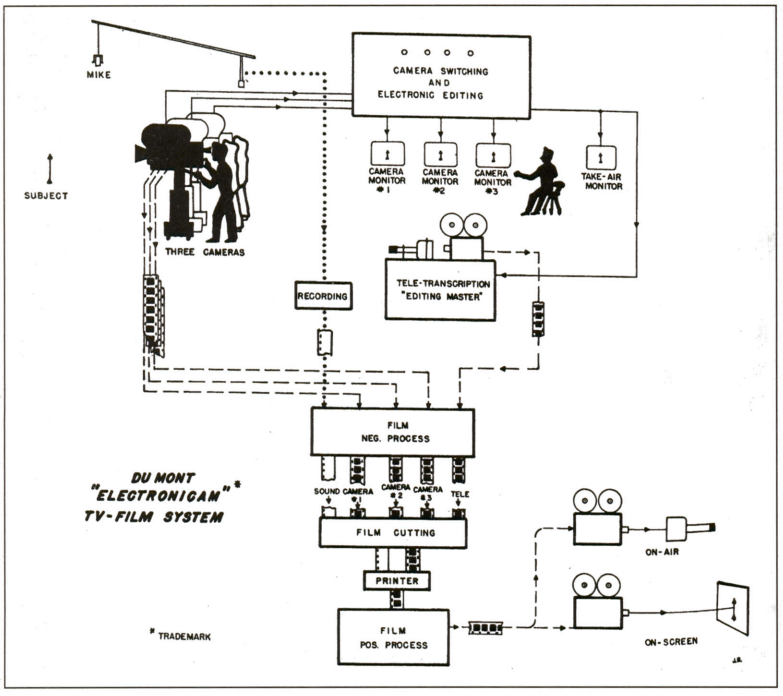
Los Angeles native **Howard Anderson III,** represents the third generation of Andersons to be involved in the motion picture industry and the second to join the ASC's active membership. While completing his Bachelor of Arts degree from UCLA, the cameraman began working for the 71-year-old Howard Anderson Company. Through his work at the company (which named him president in 1993), Anderson became adept at all types of specialized cinematography: high-speed and stop-motion camerawork, process or blue/greenscreen techniques, shooting miniatures and matte paintings, as well as opticals, animation and titles. Over the course of his 32-year career, Anderson executed cinematographic inserts and second-unit camerawork on various TV series, including *Star Trek*, *Happy Days*, *Moonlighting*, *Cheers* and *Murder, She Wrote*. He has also worked on numerous films under both his and the company's name: *Splash*, *Predator*, *Good Morning Vietnam*, *Tango & Cash*, *Hot Shots*, *Barb Wire* and the recent *X-Files* feature.

Raymond Emeritz and **Don Henderson** have joined the ASC as associate members. Emeritz, an Illinois native who resides in New York, is the director of engineering at Panavision and has worked in the motion picture industry for 61 years. He began his career at the Eastman Kodak Co. in Chicago. He was soon inducted into the U.S. Army and joined the Army Pictorial Service for training with motion picture and still cameras. During World War II, he maintained 35mm and 16mm cameras and other photo equipment in England and France for all branches of the U.S. military, as well as for foreign correspondents from *Life, Look* and other publications. After the war, he started Camera Services, Inc. where, in addition to performing maintenance on all types of photo equipment, he designed and built special camera devices for clients such as March of Time, Pathé News, *Life* and *Look*. The company holds patents on some 30 devices. In 1955, he became Director of Engineering for the Camera Equipment Co., which later became F&B CECO Inc. There, he created reflex and video systems for Mitchell, Auricon and other firms; he also built a 16mm camera for the NFL. In 1967, Emeritz began working for General Camera, which later became the New York representative of Panavision.

Pennsylvania native Don Henderson is a 32-year veteran of the Eastman Kodak company, where he now serves as a senior production representative. During the Vietnam War, Henderson was a laboratory technician, processing and printing still combat photos. Afterwards, he spent two years at Eastman's Hollywood office in association with the motion picture industry. After moving to Phoenix, he worked with Eastman Kodak's motion picture producer, news film, military and audiovisual clients in the Southwest. Henderson also worked in Chicago with wet and dry labs, commercial producers and location feature productions. There, he was active in the production community, serving as Section Chairman of SMPTE and President of the Chicago Film Council. Since returning to L.A., Henderson has provided the Hollywood production community with his considerable knowledge and expertise. ■

WRAP SHOT





Above: The Du Mont electronicams employed in classic three-camera fashion. Right: A schematic explanation of the hybrid film/video camera's use.

"One of these days Alice. . . *pow,* right in the kisser!" Surly blue-collar Everyman Ralph Kramden often blurted this famous threat at his wife after she had chastised him for bumbling into to yet another no-account scheme of his own making.

Interestingly, *The Honeymooners* had a mere one-season run (1955-56) as a show of its own. The program actually began as a sketch — first as part of Du Mont's *Cavalcade of Stars,* and then in star Jackie Gleason's own eponymous one-hour series. A decade after its original run, the brief series resurfaced, this time as a segment of another Gleason variety show which ran for five years.

This photograph appeared in *AC*'s October 1955 issue as an illustration for the article "Gleason Goes 'Live on Film.'" True to form, Gleason and Art Carney (in his role as Kramden's stalwart buddy Ed Norton) yuk it up at New York City's Adelphi Theater before 1,200 audience members. Twice weekly, the actors would record their antics for broadcast, accompanied by their onscreen wives (played by Audrey Meadows and Joyce Randolph, respectively).

The Honeymooners marked the first time that a prominent television program was photographed with the Du Mont Electronicam TV/film system. Here, camera operators man three of the Electronicam "pickup units," each of which consisted of a TV camera and a Mitchell 35mm film camera. Mounted together side by side, the twin cameras allowed for simultaneous electronic and emulsion capture. The video material was transmitted live to a control room where the director selected edits and camera angles, much in the same manner employed today on three-camera newscasts.

The director's video editing choices were later fed into kinescope equipment to create a "teletranscription" — a blueprint of how the program appeared during broadcast. The teletranscription was then synchronized to the 35mm film reels that were sent off for editing. The archival film versions of each episode — shot on Kodak's Tri-X stock — were later used for delayed broadcasts and reruns. The Electronicam TV/film system thus permitted the actors to perform with the spontaneity of a live taping while preserving the performance forever on high-quality celluloid.

— Andrew O. Thompson

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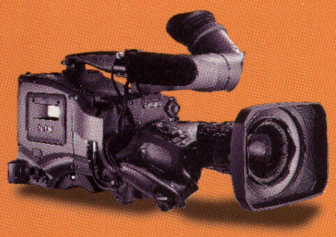

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